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Q. Pag. Lond.

THE MISCHIEFS OF Self-Ignorance, AND THE BENEFITS OF Self-Acquaintance;

Opened in Divers Sermons at *Dunstan's-West*: And Published in answer to the Accusations of some, and the Desires of others.

By *Richard Baxter*.

For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself: But let every man prove his own work; and then shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another; For every man shall bear his own burden.

London, Printed by *R. White* for *F. Tyton*, at the three daggers in *Fleet-street*, 1662.
at 2s. 6d. bound.

To the right Honourable *Anne* Countess of *Balcarres*, &c.

Madam,

Though it be usual in Dedications to proclaim the honour of inscribed names, and though the proclaiming of yours be a work that none are like to be offended at that know you, they esteeming you the honour of your sex and nation; yet that you may see I intend not to displease you by any unsafe or unsavoury applause, I shall presume here to lay a double dishonour upon you: The one by prefixing your name to these lean and hasty Sermons: The other by laying part of the blame upon your self, and telling the world that the fault is partly yours that they are published; Not only *yours I confess: For*

had it not been for some such auditors as Christ had, Luk. 20. 20. *and* Mark 12. 13. *and for the frequent reports of such as are mentioned* Psal. 35. 11. *I had not written down all that I delivered, and so had been uncapable of so easily answering your desires. But it was you that was not content to hear them, but have invited them to recite their message more publikely: as if that were like to be valued, and effectual upon common hearts, which through your strength of charity and holy appetite, is so with yours. My own thoughts went in the middle way; neither thinking as those that accused these Sermons of injurious tendencie, against ——— I know not whom, or what. (that have been so long in contention, that they dream they are still contending, and fancie every word they hear, from those that their uncharitableness calleth adversaries, to signifie some hostile terrible thing; as the scalded head doth fear cold water:) nor yet did I think them worthy to be tendered by such a publication to the world: But valuing your judgement, and knowing that the subject is of great necessity, though the manner of handling be dull and dry, I hope it may be profitable to some, and I find nothing in it to be hurtful unto any, and*

therefore

therefore submit, and leave you both to bear the blame, and take the thanks, if any be returned.

I perceive you value the subjects which you have found in the practice of your soul to be most useful: As they that know God would fain have all others to know him; so those that know themselves, do love the Glass, and would have others to make use of it: I wonder not if your experience of the benefits of self-acquaintance, provoke you to desire to have more partakers in so profitable and so sweet a knowledge. Had you not known your self, you had never known your Saiviour, your God, your way and your end, as you have done: you had never been so well acquainted with the symptomes and cure of the diseases of the Soul; the nature and exercise of grace, the way of mortification, and the comfortable supports, refreshments and fore-tasts of heavenly believers: you had never so clearly seen the vanity of all the pomp and fulness of the world, nor so easily and resolutely despised its flatteries and baits, nor so quietly born variety of afflictions; nor imitated Moses, Heb. 11.25,26. *nor received the holy Character,* Psal.15. *He that is a stranger to himself, his sin, his misery, his necessi-*

ty, &c. is a stranger to God, and to all that might denominate him wise or happy. To have taken the true measure of our capacities, abilities, infirmities, and necessities, and thereupon to perceive what is really BEST FOR US, *and most agreeable to our case, is the first part of true practical saving knowledge. Did the distracted mindless world consider, what work they have at home for their most serious thoughts and care and diligence, and of what unspeakable concernment and necessity it is, and that men carry within them the matter of their final doom, and the beginning of endless joy or sorrows, they would be called home from their busie-idleness, their laborious-loss of precious time, and unprofitable vagaries, and would be studying their hearts, while they are doting about a multitude of impertinencies, and would be pleasing God while they are purveying for the flesh; and they would see that it more concerneth them to know the day of their salvation, and now to lay up a treasure in Heaven, that they may die in faith, and live in everlasting Joy and Glory, than in the crowd and noise of the ambitious, covetous, voluptuous Sensualists, to run after a feather, till time is past, and mercy gone, and endless woe hath unexpectedly surprized them.*

them. Yet do these dead men think they live, *because they laugh, and talke, and ride, and goe, and dwell among gnats and flies in the sun shine, and not with worms and dust in darkness : They think they are awake, because they dream that they are busie ; and that they are doing the works of men, because they make a pudder and a noise for finer cloaths, and larger room, and sweeter morsels, and lower congees and submissions than their poorer undeceived neighbours have : They think they are sailing to felicity, because they are tossed up and down : And if they can play the Jacks among the fishes, or the wolves or foxes in the flocks of Christ, or if they can attain to the honour of a Pestilence, to be* able *to do a great deal of* hurt, *they are proud of it, and look as* high *as if they saw neither the* Grave *nor* Hell, *nor knew how quickly they must be taken* down, *and laid so low, that* [the Righteous shall see it, and fear, and laugh at them, saying, Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthned himself in his wickedness, *Psal.* 52. 6,7. [Behold, these are the ungodly that prosper in the world, and increase in riches; surely they are set in slippery places,

and cast down to destruction and brought to desolation as in a moment; and utterly consumed with terrors; As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image, *Psal.* 73. Though while they lived they blessed themselves, and were praised by men; yet when they die they carry nothing away; their glory shall not descend after them; like sheep they are laid in the grave: death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; Man in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish; This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings, *Psal.* 49. *As the proverb is, At last the wolfs skin is brought to the market, and the Foxes to the Furrier. They shall find that God is not afraid to lay the hand of Justice on the stoutest of them, and will be as bold with silken shining gallants, as with the poorest worms; and will spit in the face of that mans glory, who durst spit in the face of the Glory of his Redeemer; and will trample upon the interest which is set up against the interest of Christ. The jovial world do now think that* self-study *is too Melancholy a thing: and they choose to be* distracted

for

for fear of being melancholy : *and will be* Mad *in* Solomons *ſenſe, that they may be* wiſe *and* happy *in their* own : Eccleſ. 2. 2. The heart of fools is in the houſe of mirth, and the heart of the wiſe in the' houſe of mourning, *Eccleſ.* 7. 4. *and yet there is moſt* Joy *in the* Hearts *of the wiſe, and leaſt ſolid peace in the hearts of fools : They know that conſcience hath ſo much againſt them, that they dare not hear its accuſations and its ſentence: They dare not look into the hideous dungeon of their hearts : nor peruſe the accounts of their bankrupt ſouls, nor read the hiſtory of their impious unprofitable lives, leſt they ſhould be tormented before the time : They dare not live like* ſerious men, *leſt they ſhould loſe thereby the delights of* bruits. *O ſinful men ! againſt what light, both natural and ſupernatural, do they offend ! They ſee how all things haſte away ; The names of their predeceſſors are left as a warning to them ; every corps that is carried to the grave, being dead, yet ſpeaketh : and every bone that is thence caſt up, doth riſe as a witneſs againſt their luxury and luſt : and yet they will have their wills and pleaſure while they may, whatever it coſt them : and they will ſet their houſes on fire that they might have one*

merry

merry blaze, and warm them once before they die.

O Madam, *how happy are you (if one on earth may be called happy,) that have looked home so often and so seriously, that now you can dwell at home in peace, and need not, as the ungodly, be a terror to your self, nor run away from your self, nor seek a place to hide you from your self: when impious vagrants have so abused their Consciences, that they dare not converse with them, nor meet them alone or in the dark! what a mercy is it, that in the great Reconciler you are reconciled to your Conscience, and that it doth not find you out as an enemy, but is a messenger of peace and of good tidings to you! That you need not the smiles of great ones to refresh you, nor pompous entertainments, complements, plays or sports to recreate you and drive away your sorrows; but that you can find more blessed and delectable company and employment at home; That you can daily retire into your self, and there peruse a richer treasure, than bodily eyes on earth can see; and there be taken up with a far more contenting satisfactory employment, and a more fruitful and pleasant converse and recreation, than any creature in Court or Countrey can afford:*

That

That your joy is laid up where the hand of violence cannot touch it; and that they that can deprive you of estate, and liberty, and life, yet cannot take your comfort from you. That when fleshly unthrifts love not home, because all is spent, and they can expect no better entertainment there than want, confusion, chiding and distress, you can withdraw from a confused troublesome world, into a well-furnished and adorned soul, replenished with the precious fruits of the Spirit, and beautified with the image of your Lord! O Madam, *what sweet and noble employment have you there, in comparison of that which worldlings are troubled with abroad! There you may read the sentence of your justification, as foregoing and foreshewing the publike final sentence of your Judge: There you can converse with God himself, not in his vindictive justice, but as he* is Love: *For the* love *that* dwelleth *so plentifully* in you, *doth prove that* God dwelleth in you, and you in him, 1 *Joh.* 4. 7, 8, 16. *There you may converse with* Christ your head, *that* dwelleth in you by faith, *Ephes.* 3. 17. *and with the* Holy Ghost *who* dwelleth *in you, and hath communion with you, by the beams of his illuminating, sanctifying, Confirming and comforting grace:*

There,

There, as in his Temple *you are* speaking of his Glory, (1 *Cor.* 3. 16, 17. & 6. 19. *with Psal.* 29. 9.) *and rejoycing in his holy praise, and remembring what he hath done for your soul: There you can peruse the Records of his Mercy, and think with gratitude and delight, how he did first illuminate you, and draw and engage your heart unto himself: What advantage he got upon you, and what iniquity he prevented by the mercies of your education, and how he secretly took acquaintance with you in your youth: How he delivered you from worldly fleshly snares; how he caused you to savour the things of the Spirit: how he planted you in a sound well ordered Church, where he quickened and conducted you by a lively faithful Ministery, and watered his gifts by their constant powerful preaching of his word, where Discipline was for a defence, and where your heart was warmed with the communion of the Saints, and where you learned to worship God in spirit and in truth; and where you were taught so effectually by God to discern between the precious and the vile, and to love those that are born of God, whom the world knoweth not, that no subtilties or calumnies of the Serpent can unteach it you, or ever be able to separate you from*

that

that love. You may read in these sacred Records of your Heart, how the Angel of the Covenant hath hitherto conducted you, through this wilderness towards the land of promise; how he hath been a cloud to you in the day, and a pillar of fire by night; how the Lord did number you with the people that are his flock, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance: and led you about in a desert land, instructed you, and kept you as the apple of his eye. (Deut. 32. 9. 10.) *His Manna hath compassed your tent: his doctrine hath dropped as the rain, and his words distilled as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showres upon the grass,* (v. 2.) *As his beloved you have dwelt in safety by him; and the Lord hath covered you all the day long,* (c. 33. 12.) *when storms have risen, he hath been your refuge; and when dangers compassed you on every side, he hath hid you as in his pavilion, and his Angels have pitcht their tents about you, and born you up: you have been fortified in troubles, and enabled comfortably to undergoe them: in war and in peace; in your native country and in forreign lands; among your friends and among your enemies; in Court and Country; in prosperity and adversity, you have found that* there is none like the God of *Israel,*

Israel, who rideth upon the heaven in your help, and his excellency on the skie: The Eternal God hath been your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, (*Deut.* 34. 26, 27.) *You may remember the mercies of your younger years, of your maried state, and of your widdow-hood: your comforts in your truly Noble Lord, though troubled and interrupted by his death, yet increased by the consideration of his felicity with Christ; your comfort in your hopeful issue, though abated by the injury of Romish theft, which stole one of the Roses of your Garden, that they might boast of the sweetness when they called it their own: (I may well say,* stole it, *when all the cheat was performed by unknown persons in the dark; and no importunity by you or me, could procure me one dispute or conference in her hearing, with any of the seducers, before her person was stoln away.) Though comforts conveyed by creatures must have their pricks, yet your experience hath partly taught you (and more will do) that by all the mixtures of sower and bitter ingredients, your Father doth temper you the most wholesome composition;* He chasteneth you for your profit, *that* you may be partaker of his Holiness (*Heb.* 12. 10.) *and the least*

degree

degree of Holineſs *cannot be purchaſed at too dear a rate. His rod and ſtaffe have comforted you: and whatever are the beginnings, the* End will be, the quiet fruit of Righteouſneſs, *when you have been* exerciſed therein: *And though man be mutable, and friends, and fleſh, and heart have failed you, yet God is ſtill the ſtrength of your heart, and your portion for ever,* Pſal. 73. 26. *O the variety of learning that is contained in the ſecret writings of a ſanctified heart! The variety of ſubjects for the moſt fruitful and delightful thoughts, which you may find recorded in the inwards of your ſoul! How pleaſant is it there to find the Characters of the ſpecial Love of God, the lineaments of his Image, the tranſcript of his Law, the harmony of his gifts and graces, the witneſs, the ſeal and the earneſt of his Spirit, and the foretaſts and beginnings of Eternal Life! As Thankfulneſs abhors oblivion, and is a Recording grace, and keepeth Hiſtories and Catalogues of Mercies; ſo is it a Reward unto it ſelf; and by theſe Records it furniſheth the ſoul with matter for the ſweeteſt employments and delights; Is it not pleaſant to you there to Read, how God hath confuted the objections of diſtruſt? how oft he hath condeſcended to your weakneſs,*

and

and pardoned you when you could not easily forgive your self? how oft he hath entertained you in secret with his Love? and visited you with his consolations? How neer him sometimes you have got in fervent prayer, and serious meditation? And when for a season he hath hid his face, how soon and seasonably he returned? How oft he hath found you weeping, and hath wiped away your tears? and calmed and quieted your troubled soul? How he hath resolved your doubts, and expelled your fears; and heard your prayers? How comfortably he hath called you His Child; *and given you leave, and commanded you to call him* Father; *when Christ hath brought you with boldness into his presence! How sweet should it be to your remembrance, to think how the Love of Christ hath sometime exalted you above these sublunary things! How the Spirit hath taken you up to Heaven, and shewed to your faith the Glory of the New* Hierusalem, *the blessed company of those Holy spirits that attend the Throne of the Majesty of God, and the shining face of your glorified Head! By what seasonable and happy Messengers he hath sent you the Cluster of Grapes as the first fruits of the land of promise! and commanded you oft to Take and*

Eate

Eate the Bread of Life? How oft he hath reached to your thirsty soul the fruit of the Vine, and turned it sacramentally into his blood, and bid you drink it in remembrance of him, till he come *and feast you with his fullest Love, and satisfie you with the pleasure and presence of his Glory.*

But the volumes of mercy written in your heart, are too great to be by me transcribed. I can easily appeal to you that are acquainted with it, whether such Heart-employment be not more pleasant and more profitable, than any of the entertainments that flashy wit, or gaudy gallantry, or merriments, luxurie, or preferments can afford? Is it not better converse with Christ at home, than with such as are described, Psa. 12. *abroad? To dwell with all that blessed retinue,* Gal. 5. 22, 23. *than with Pride, Vainglory, Envy, Dissimulation, Hypocrisie, Falshood, time-wasting, soul-destroying pleasures, to say nothing of the filthiness which Christian years abhor the mention of, and which God himself in time will judge,* Eph. 5. 3, 4, 5, 6. Heb. 13. 4. *and the rest recited,* Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. *If* ungodly *persons do find it more* unpleasant *to converse at home, no wonder, when there is nothing but darkness and defilement; and when they have*

put God from them, and entertained Satan, so that their hearts are like to haunted houses, where terrible cries and apparitions do make it a place of fear to the inhabitants. But if their souls had such blessed inhabitants as yours; could they meet there with a reconciled God, a Father, a Saviour and a sanctifier; had they souls that kept a correspondency with Heaven, it would not seem so sad and terrible a life, to dwell at home, and withdraw from that noise of vanity abroad, which are but the drums and trumpets of the devil, to encourage his deluded followers, and drown the cries of miserable souls. Your dearest friends and chiefest treasure, are not abroad in Court or Country; but above *you, and* within *you; where then should your delightful converse be, but where your friends and treasure are?* Matth. 6. 21. Phil. 3. 20. Col. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *When there is almost nothing to be found in the conversation of the world, but discord and distraction, and confusion, and clamours, and malice, and treachery, is it not better to retire into such a heart, where notwithstanding infirmities and some doubts and fears, there is order, and concord, and harmony, and such Peace, as the world can neither give nor take away? O blessed be the hand of Love, that*

blotted

blotted out the names *of* Honour, *and Riches, and Pleasures, and carnal interest, and accommodations, from your heart; and inscribed his own in Characters never to be obliterate! That turned out Usurpers, and so prepared and furnished your heart, as to make and judge it such, as no one is worthy of it but himself. O what a Court have you chosen for your abode? How high and Glorious! how pure and holy! unchangeable and safe! How ambitiously do you avoid ambition? How great are you in the lowliness of your mind? How high in your Humility? Will no lower a place than Heaven content you to converse in? (For Heart-converse and Heaven-converse are as much one, as beholding both the* Glass *and* Face:) *Will no lower correspondents satisfie you than the Host of Heaven? Cannot the company of imperfect mortals serve your turn? Nay, can you be satisfied with none below the Lord himself? Well,* Madam, *if you will needs have it so, it shall be so: What you judge* BEST FOR YOU, *shall be yours: what you had rather be, you are: and where you had rather dwell, you shall: and seeing you have understood that* One thing is necessary, *and have* chosen the Good part, *it* shall not be

 taken

taken from you, *Luke* 10. 41, 42. *Having* first sought the Kingdom of God and his Righteousnes. *you shall have such Addionalls as will do you good*, Matth. 6. 33. Rom. 8. 28. Psal. 84. 11. *You have learned to know while God is yours, how little of the Creature you need, and how little addition it maketh to your happiness (You are Wise enough if you live to God; and honourable enough if you are a member of Christ; and rich enough if you are an heir of heaven; and beautiful enough if you have the image of God: and yet having made your choice of these, how liberally hath God cast in as overplus, the inferior kind; which you* find *in* losing them? *As if he had said to you, as to* Solomon, 2 *Chron.* 1. 11. [Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked Wisdom and knowledge for thy self—— Wisdom and Kowledge is granted to thee; and I will give thee Riches, and wealth, and honour ——]; *as if God would convince even flesh itself that none are like the servants of the Lord: And when the envious one hath said, that* You serve not God for nought, *though he hath been permitted to*

put

put forth his hand, and touch you in your deareſt friends and relations; your peace, your habitation and eſtate, yet hath he ſo reſtrained him, and ſupported you, as may eaſily convince you that the Worſt *of* Chriſt *is better than the* Beſt of the World, *or* Sin.

I have purpoſely been long in opening the felicity of Heart-converſe, as a matter of your own experience, both for the exciting of you to a life of Thankfulneſs to God, and that this undigeſted Treatiſe which you have drawn out into the light, may come to your hands with ſome ſupply, in that part of the Application which doth moſt concern you: And becauſe your Name may draw the eyes of many others to read this Preface, I ſhall add here a few Directions to thoſe that would be well acquainted with themſelves, and would comfortably converſe at home.

Direct. 1. Let him not overvalue or mind the deceitful world, that would have fruitful converſe with God & with himſelf: *Truſt not ſuch a cheater, as hath robbed ſo many thouſands before us; eſpecially when God and common experience do call out to us to take heed: The ſtudy of Riches, and riſing, and reputation, and pleaſures agreeth not with this ſtudy of God, and of our hearts: And though the world will not take* acquaintance

tance *with us*, *if we come not in* their fashion, *nor* see us, *if we stand not on the* higher ground; *yet it is much better to be* unknown *to* others, *than to* our selves: *Though they that* live *upon the* trade, *do thinke there is no fishing like the Sea, yet those that take it but* on the by, *will rather choose the smaller waters, where though the fish be less, yet few are drowned, and made a prey to the fish that they would have catched. A retirement therefore must be made, from the* inordinate *pursuit of* worldly things, *and the charms of* honours, riches, *and* delights: *And if some present loss do seem to follow, it is indeed no loss, which tendeth unto gain. He will catch no fish that will not lose his flie. Me thinks they that sincerely pray* [*Lead us not into temptation,*] *should not desire to have bolts and barrs between God and them, and to dwell where salvation is hardliest attained! Desire not to be planted in any such place,* (*though it seem a Paradise,*) *where God is most unknown, and used as a stranger, and where Saints are wonders, and examples of serious piety are most rare, and where a Heavenly Conversation is known but by reports, and reported of according to the malice of the Serpent, and represented but as fancie, hypocrisie or faction:*

faction: where sin most prospereth, and is in least disgrace; and where it is a greater shame to be a Saint than to be a Swine; a serious Christian, than a seared stupified sensualist: Bless you from that place where the weeds of vice are so rank, as that no good plant can prosper neer them: Where gain is Godliness; and impiety is necessary to acceptable observance; and a tender Conscience, and the fear of God, are characters of one too surly and unplyable to be countenanced by men; where the tongue that nature formed to be the Index of the mind, is made the chiefest instrument to hide it; and men are so conscious of their own incredibility, that no one doth believe or trust another: where no words are Heart-deep, *but those that are spoken* Against Christs cause and interest, *or* for their own; *where a vile person is honoured, and those contemned that fear the Lord: Bless you from the place where truth is intollerable, and untruth cloaked with its name: where holiness is lookt at as an Owle or enemie, and yet hypocrisie must steal its honour from it: where he is a Saint that is less wicked than infamous transgressors; and where* Dives *life is blameless temperance; and where Pride, Idleness, Fulness of bread, and filthy fornication and lasciviousness, are*

the infirmities of Pious and excellent persons: where great sins are small ones, and small ones are none; and where the greatest must have no reproof, and the Physician is taken for the greatest enemy: where chaffe is valued at the price of wheat, and yet the famine is of choice *: where* persons *and* things *are measured by* Interest; *and duty to God derided as folly, when ever it crosseth the wisdom of the world, and hated as some hurtful thing when it crosseth fleshly men in their desires: And where* Dives *Brethren are unwarned; and none are more secure and frolick, than those that to morrow may be in Hell; and as at the Gladiators Sports, none complain less than those that speed worst*, quia cæsi silent, spectatores vociferantur. *Old Travellers are usually most addicted to end their days in solitude; Learn to contemn the world at cheaper rates than they; Neither hope, nor wish to live an* Alexander, *and die a* Socrates; *A Crowd or concourse, though of the greatest, where is the greatest tumult of affairs, and confluence of temptations, is not the safest place to die in: and I have most mind to live where I would die. Where men are* Barbari moribus, etsi non natione; *Christians in Name, and infidels in Conversation: the sweetness of their Christian names will*

will not preserve them or you from the danger of their unchristian lives: It was not the whole of Lots *deliverance to be saved from the flames of* Sodom, *but it was much of it to be freed from their malitious rage, and filthy grievous conversations: The best medicine against the Plague, is to keep far enough from the place that hath it. The Proverb saith, He shall have fleas that will lye with the dogs. Desire not that condition, where all seem friends, but none are friends indeed; but they that seem to be your servants, are by flattery serving themselves upon you: Where few persons or things are truly represented; but men are judged of by the descriptions of their enemies, and the Lambs have the skins and names of Wolves: and the best are odious when bold calumniators load them with odious accusations. In a word, desire not the place, where the more men seek, the less they find, and the more they find, the less they have: and the more they have, the less they do enjoy: Where the more are their provisions the less are their supplies: the more their wealth, the more their want: the more thier pleasure, the less their Peace: the greater their Mirth, the less their Joy: the greater their confidence, the less their safety: Where the great Mistake about their* Happiness, *their* Best,

their

their End, *doth make their lives a constant error, and death a dolefull disappointment: He must needs lie crooked that hath so short a bed.*

Direct. 2. Keep all clean and sound within; *that there may be little of loathsomeness to disaffect you, or terror to frighten you from your selves; It is a frightfull thing to be much conversing with a guilty soul, and hearing the accusations of a conscience not cleansed by the blood of Christ: And it is an unpleasant thing to be searching in our wounds, and reading the history of a life of folly; especially of wilful sin, and of ungrateful neglect of offered grace. Make not such work for your self, if you love it not. We make our beds ill, and then we are aweary of them, because they are so hard: Our Comforts are more in our own hands then in any others: The best friend or Pastor cannot do so much to promote them, nor the greatest enemy so much to destroy them as our selves. If we will surfet, and make our selves sick, we must endure it. If Wasps and Vipers be our guests, no wonder if we dwell not quietly at home; and if we sit not at ease, when we carry thorns about us. Folly and Concupiscence breed our misery: It is the smoak of our own corruptions that troubleth our eyes,*

and

and the ſcent & ſmart of our ulcerated minds that moſt annoyeth us. We cannot waſte our Peace, and have it. Turk and Pope, and all the terrible names on earth, are not ſo terrible deſervedly to a ſinner as his own: The neareſt evil is the moſt hurtful evil: If a ſcolding Wife be ſuch a continual dropping, and troubleſome companion, as Solomon *tells us, what then is a diſtempered, troubled mind, and a chiding conſcience? It is pitty that man ſhould be his own afflicter, but ſo it is: And, as the proverb is, he hath great need of a fool, that will play the fool himſelf; ſo I may ſay, He hath great need of a tormenter, that will be a tormenter to himſelf. Folly, and luſt, and raſhneſs, and paſſion are ſorry keepers of our peace: Darkneſs and filth do make a dungeon, and not a delightful habitation of our hearts: God would take pleaſure in them, if we kept them clean, and would walk with us in thoſe gardens, if we kept them dreſt: But if we will defile his Temple, and make it unpleaſing unto him, he will make it unpleaſing unto us. Terror and trouble are the ſhadow of ſin, that follow it, though the Sun ſhine never ſo brightly. If we carry fire in our cloaths, we ſhall ſmell it at the leaſt. Keep cloſe to God: obey his will: make ſure of your Reconciliation and Adoption:*

tion: keep clear your Evidences: and grieve not the holy Spirit which sealeth you, and must comfort you: And then it will do you good to look into your heart, and there you shall find the most delightful company; and the Spirit that you have there entertained, will there entertain you with his joyes.

But if disorder have prevailed and made your Hearts a place of trouble, yet fly not from it, and refuse not to converse with it: For though it be not at the present a work of pleasure, it is a work of Necessity, and may tend to pleasure in the end: Conversing Wisely and faithfully with a disordered troubled heart, is the way to make it a well ordered and quiet heart.

Direct. 3. In judging of your present state and actions, let one eye be alwayes on the end: *This will both* quicken *you to be* serious *in the duty, and* direct *you in all particular cases to judge aright. As the approach of death doth convince almost all men of the necessity of studying themselves, and calleth them to it from all other studies; so the considerate* foresight *of it, would do the like in better time. And it is the* End *that communicateth the* Good *or* Evil *to all things in the* way: *and therefore as they have* relation *to the* End,

they

they must be judged of. When you peruse your actions, consider them as done by one that is entring into Eternity, and as those that must all be opened in a clearer light. If we separate our actions in our considerations from their ends, they are not of the same signification, but taken to be other things then indeed they are. If the Oaths, the Lies, the Slanders, the Sensuality and filthiness of impure sinners, had not relation to the loss of Heaven, and to the pains of Hell, they were not matters of that exceeding moment as now they are: And if the Holiness, Obedience and Watchfulness of believers, had no relation to the escaping of Hell fire, and the attainment of eternal life, they would be of lower value then they are. The more clearly men discern that God is present, that judgement is at hand, that they are near to Heaven or Hell, where millions have already received their reward, the more seriously will they study, and the better will they know themselves.

Direct. 4. *Though you must endeavour to judge* your self truly as you are, *yet* rather encline to think meanly, then highly of your self, and be rather too suspitious, then too presumptuous. *My reasons for this direction are, Because mans nature is generally disposed to self-exalting; and pride, and self-*

self-love are sins so common and so strong, as that it is a thing of wondrous difficulty to overcome them, so far as to judge our selves impartially, and to err as little in our own cause, as if it were anothers: and because self-exalting hath far more dangerous effects, then self-abasing, supposing them to exceed their bounds. Prudent humility is a quieting grace, and avoideth many storms and tempests, which trouble and shake the peace of others. It maketh men thankfull for that little as undeserved, which others repine at as short of their expectations: It telleth the sufferer that God doth afflict him much less then he deserveth: *and causeth him to say,* I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him (Micah 7.9.) *It teacheth us a cautelous suspition of our own understandings, and a just submission to those that are wiser than our selves: When Pride keepeth out Wisdom, by keeping out the knowledge of our ignorance. And as* Pliny *tells us of some Nations, where they are grey-headed in their Infancy, and black-headed when they are old; So Pride maketh many wise so soon, that they never come to be truly wise: They think in youth that they have more than the wisdom of age, and therefore in age they have less then what be-*

seemed

seemed them in youth. Every hard report or usage is ready to break a proud mans heart: when contempt doth little disquiet the humble, because they judge so meanly of themselves. The proud are frequently disturbed, because they climb into the seats of others: when humility sits quietly, and no one bids it rise, because it knoweth and keepeth its own place. Therefore it is that true contrition having once told us of our folly to the Heart, doth make us walk more circumspectly while we live: And that no man is better resolved *then he that was once* in doubt, *and that no man standeth faster, than he that hath had a fall: and no man is more safe, then he that hath had most assaults. If you love your safety, desire not either* to be, *or* to seem *too high. Be little in your own eyes, and be content to be so in the eyes of others. As for* worldly Greatness, *affect neither the* thing, *nor the* reputation *of it:* Look up *if you please, to the tops of Steeples, Masts and Mountains: but stand below if you would be safe. Though the Chimney be the highest part of the house; it is not the cleanest or the sweetest part: it is scorcht more with the fire, and suffocated with the smoke than other parts. And for spiritual endowments, desire them, and improve them: but desire not in-*

inordinately the reputation *of them: It seldom increaseth a mans Humility, to be* reputed *Humble: And though Humility help you to bear* applause *yet the remnants of pride are ready to take fire, and other sins to get advantage by it.*

Direct. 5. Improve your self-acquaintance to a due apprehension of what is most suitable, most profitable, and necessary for you, and what is most hurtfull, unsuitable and unnecessary. *He that hath taken a just measure of* himself, *is the better able to judge of* all things *else. How suitable will Christ and grace appear, and how unsuitable will worldly pomp appear, to one that truly knows himself? How suitable will serious fervent worship appear, and how unsuitable the ludicrous shews of Hypocrites? And one pair of eyes will be valued above many pair of spectacles; and one pair of legs before two pair of crutches, by one that is not a stranger to himself. He that takes grass and provender to be his best and most delightful food, hath sure forgotten that he is a man, and taketh himself to be but a beast, or else he would not choose the food of a beast, nor use himself as a beast. If a man knew aright the capacity and tendency of the Reasonable nature, and the evil of sin, and the necessity*

and

and distress of an unrenewed soul, What sweet, What longing thoughts would he have of God, and all that tendeth to the pleasing and enjoying of him? How little would he think himself concerned in the trivial matters of honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, favour or displeasure, further than as they help or hinder him in the things that are of more regard? Know your self, and you will know what to Love, and what to hate; what to choose, and what to refuse; What to hold, and what to lose; what to esteem, and what to slight; what to fear, and when to be couragious and secure: the curing the dotage thus, would cure the night-walks of the dreaming, vagrant world: And they that find that musick cureth not the Stone or Gowt, would know that mirth, and gallantry, and vain-glory, are no preservatives from Hell, nor sufficient cure for a guilty soul: And that if an aking head must have a better remedy than a golden Crown, and a deaseased body, a more suitable cure than a silken suit, a diseased soul doth call for more.

Direct. 6. Value not your self by mutable Accidents, but by the essence and substance of Christianity. A mans life consisteth not in the abundance which he possesseth, *Luke* 12. 15. Paul *knew better what*

he said, when he accounted all but loss and dung *for the knowledge and fruition of Jesus Christ* (Phil. 3. 7, 8.) *then they that dote on it as their felicity: And is a man to be valued, applauded, and magnified for his* dung, *or for his personal endowments? Is that your perfume, that stinketh in the nostrils of men of sounder senses? Judge not of the person by his apparel, when the foolishest and the worst may wear the same: The Master and inhabitants honour the house more than the house doth the Master and inhabitants. All the wit and learning in the world, with all the Riches, Honour and applause, yea and all the civility and winning deportment, will not make a Christian of an Infidel or Atheist, nor a happy of a miserable man; As nothing will make a man honourable indeed, that hath not the use of Reason, which differenceth men from bruits; so nothing will make or prove him holy or happy or safe, that hath not the Holy Image of God, which must difference his children from his enemies: If he be unsanctified, and be not a new creature, and have not the spirit of Christ within him, he is an Atheist, or Infidel, or an ungodly wretch, let him be never so rich, or great, or honourable. And as a harlot is never beautiful*

tifull in the eyes of the wise and chaste, so a wicked man is never happy in the eyes of any but his phrenetick society.

Direct. 7. Think not that a few seldom hasty thoughts will bring and keep you in acquaintance with your self. *It must be diligent observation, and serious consideration that must accomplish this. Many a man* walketh *where he doth not* dwell. *A transient salute is not a sign of intimate familiarity. It is enough sometime to step into your neighbours house for a charitable visit; but you must* dwell *in your own; Be more busie and censorious at home then the proud and the malicious are abroad: and be as seldom and tender in censuring others as such Hypocrites are in censuring themselves. Put on your spectacles at home, when you are reading over the Register of your consciences; but wear them not as you walk the streets; but take up with so much knowledge of ordinary passengers as you can have without them. Think not that you are* unconcerned *in the danger or safety of your* neighbour, *but remember that you are* more concerned *in* your own. *Its here most reasonable to say, that charity begins at home, when self-neglect will disable you to help another. And if sometimes your falls or frailty do find you matter for*

purging, griping, troublesome thoughts, and interrupt your sweeter, comfortable meditations, refuse not the trouble when you have made it necessary: Its many a sad and serious thought that the Ministers *of Christ have for the cure and safety of their* flocks*: and should not the* people *have as serious thoughts for* themselves? *None foul their hands (saith the Proverb) about their own work: They that bring in the filth, should not refuse to sweep it out. We must not cast all the foul and troublesome work upon our Nurses, as long as We can help our selves. Your Reason, your Wisdom, care and diligence, are more your Own than any ones else; and therefore should be more used for your self, then for any. And if after much thoughtfulness, and labour, you find your heart to be no whit better, yet Labour and Believe. It is not the last blow of the axe alone, that cuts down the Tree, though it fall not till the last: The growth of Grace, as of plants and fruits, and flowers, is not perceived by immediate inspection. There is much good obtained when we discern it not: And nothing is more certain, than that honest diligence is never lost in the things of God and our salvation. It is worth all our labour, if we grow no better, to keep our spark from*

going

going out, and to see that we grow no worse: And the preventing of Evil, is here an excellent Good. Many a thousand eat and drink, that never hope to grow any fatter or stronger than they are: It is not nothing to be sustained for our daily work, and to have our oyl renewed daily as it wasteth. The mill gets by going, saith the Proverb, though it stir not from the place. O keep the Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, Prov. 4.23. *Actions receive their specification and quality from the Heart. Death and Life are in the power of the tongue,* Prov. 18.21. *but the tongue is in the power of the Heart.*

Direct. 8. Let not your self-knowledge be meerly speculative, or affective, but also Practical. *Be not contented that you* know what you are, *and* what you have done, *nor that your* Heart *is much* Affected *with it: but let all tend to* Action, *to mend* What *is amiss, and to maintain, improve and increase what is good: and let the next question be,* What am I now to do? *or* What must I be for time to come? *It is a lamentable mistake of many that tire themselves with striving to make deep affecting impressions on their hearts, and when they have got much sorrow, or much joy, they think they have done*

the greatest matter, and there they stop: But Affections are the spring that must move to Action; and if you proceed not to your Duty, Affection *is much lost; And if with* smaller Affection *or* passion *you can stedfastly and resolutely* cleave to God, *and* do your Duty, *you have the* principal *thing, and are accepted: Not that* outward Actions *are accepted without the* Heart; *but that there is* most of the Heart, *where there is most of the* Estimation *and* Will, *though less of* Passion: *and there is most of* Will, *where there is most* Endeavour: *and* inward Action *is the first part of Obedience: And without these, no speculations will avail: However you find your Heart, be up and doing in the use of means, to make it better, and wait on God for further grace.*

Direct. 9. Manage your self-acquaintance prudently, cautelously, and with the help of your skilfull friend or Pastor. *Think not that it is a work that you need no Helper in. If you mistake in your Accounts, and put down a wrong summ, and call your self confidently what you* are not, *or deny Gods graces, when ever through Melancholy or distemper you cannot find them, and pass false conclusions against Gods mercies and your self, this were to turn a duty into a sin and snare.*

And

And you must do it seasonably: *Melancholy persons are most uncapable of it, who do nothing but pore upon themselves to little purpose: such must do more of other Duty, but lay by much of this till they are more capable, and make much use of the judgement of their Guides: And weaker Heads must take but a due proportion of time for self searching Meditations, lest they contract that troublesome disease: Duties must be used with profitable variety, and all done under good advice. But young persons, and those that are yet unconverted, have need to fall upon it without delay; and to follow it till they have made sure their calling and election,* 2 Pet. 1. 10. *O what a dreadfull thing it is, for a man to come rawly and newly to the study of his soul, as a thing that he is unacquainted with, when sickness is upon him, and death at hand, and he is ready to pass into another world! To be then newly to ask,* What am I? *and* What have I done? *and* Whither am I going? *and* What will become of me for ever? *is a most fearfull state of folly.*

Direct. 10, Terminate not your knowledge ultimately in your self: but pass up unto God in Christ, and to the blessed priviledges of the Saints, and the joyfull state of Endless Glory, and there let your medita-

tions be most frequent and most sweet: *But of this elsewhere.*

Madam, I have added these Directions not principally for you that have learnt the Art, but for your hopefull Sons and Daughters, who must be taught these things betimes, and for your friends who will be invited hither for your sake. They that know you not, will think I have taken too much liberty, and spoken too much both of you, *and* to you; *But I appeal from such: They that know not how easily you can pardon any one, except your self, will aggravate the weaknesses which your charity will cover. I was purposely the longer because the Treatise is defective; And if one Kingdom do not hold us, and I should see your face no more on earth, yet till we meet in the Glorious Everlasting Kingdom, we shall have frequent converse by such means as these, notwithstanding our corporal distance: And as I am assured of a room in your frequent prayers, so I hope I shall remain,*

Madam, Your faithfull Servant, and Remembrancer at the Throne of Grace,

August 25.
1661.

Richard Baxter.

Postscript.

Madam,

SInce the writing of this Epistle, finding you under the afflicting hand of God, I thought meet to remember you of what you know, that God thus traineth up his children for their Rest: whom he Loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth: If we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with children: and if we be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then we are bastards and not sons, *Heb.* 12. 6, 7, 8. The same flesh that would be pleased, will grudge when it is displeased: and that which is our enticeing enemy in prosperity, will be our disturbing enemy in adversity: As fleshly minds misjudge of the law and service of God, and cannot be subject because of the enmity against him, *Rom.* 8 7. so do they misjudge of his chastisements: And so far as they participate of this disease, the best will be repining, and tempted to unworthy thoughts of God. Even *innocent* nature is loth to suffer; Christ himself saith, If it

be

be thy will, let this cup pass from me: And nature so far as it is corrupted, is yet much more averse, because the Flesh is more inordinately desirous of its ease, and passion more turbulent when it is denyed, and the soul hath less apprehension and relish of that *Love of God*, which is the *cause* and *End*, and should sweeten all to a Reconciled well-composed mind: and it is also less *satisfied in the will of God*, and it is less *subject* to it: and patience is defective because of the weakness of the Graces that should support us. Besides which also, a tenderness of spirit, and overmuch sensibility, fears and trouble, are ordinary effects of the weak and tender nature of man, especially of the more weak and tender sex: And when all these concur (the averseness of the most innocent nature, the remnants of sin, and the special tenderness of your nature and sex,) your burden and tryal is much the greater, and your grief must needs be much the more. But, I beseech you, remember, that you have not to do with an Enemy, but a Father that knoweth what he doth, and meaneth you no hurt, but that which is the fittest means to your good, and to your scaping greater hurt; that loveth you no less

less in the greatest of your pain and danger, than in the greatest of your prosperity and peace: that you have a Head in Heaven that was partaker with us of flesh and blood, that he might deliver us from our bondage which we are in through the fear of death, who was made perfect by suffering; and is not ashamed to call us Brethren; being in all things made like unto us, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for our sins: who in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted, *Heb.* 2. 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18. We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted or tryed as we are, but without sin: He that himself in the days of his flesh, did offer up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears to him that was able to save him from death, (*Heb.* 5. 7.) will not be angry if his servants complain and cry to him in their suffering: He that cryed out, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me! will pitty his poor distressed members, and not forsake them, when they think themselves forsaken; And if they

go

go beyond their bounds in their complainings, he will not therefore disregard their moans; But he that honoured the patience of *Job*, though he so passionately cursed the day of his birth, will love the faith and patience of his people, notwithstanding the mixtures of unbelief and impatience; He is ready with his gracious excuse, *Matth.* 26. 41. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak; And he considereth that our strength and flesh is not of stones or brass, *Job* 6. 12. He will therefore revive the spirit of the contrite, and will not contend for ever, nor be alwaies wroth, lest the spirit should faile before him, and the souls which he hath made, *Isai.* 57. 15, 16. And though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: yet the end is that he may make us partakers of his Holiness; and afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, *Heb.* 12. 10, 11. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tryed he shall receive the Crown of Life, which God hath promised to them that love him, *Jam.* 1. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law, that thou mayest

give

give him rest from the days of adversity untill the pit be digged for the wicked; For the Lord will not Cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance, *Psal.* 94. 12, 13, 14.

Madam, if nothing in all the world be more certain, that that there is a God, who is true and just, and delighteth in his people when they are lowest in the world; If nothing be more sure than that there is a Heaven for persevering penitent believers: then are our Arguments for the comfort of Gods afflicted ones, no fancies, but fetcht as from the highest excellencies, so from the surest realities that ever were presented to the understanding of a man: And though the best of Saints have been put to wrestle with the temptations that arise from the adversity of Believers, and the prosperity of the wicked; yet this is still the result of all their perplexing thoughts; Truly God is good to *Israel*, even to such as are of a clean heart: Though sometime their feet are almost gone, and their paths do well nigh slip, and they are ready to say, We have cleansed our hearts in vain, and washed our hands in innocency; for all the day are we plagued, and chastened every morning; yet they soon learn in the

sanctuary

sanctuary of God, that the wicked are set in slippery places, and cast down into destruction, and brought to desolation as in a moment, and utterly consumed with terrors; as a dream when one awaketh, so the Lord when he awaketh, will despise their image, *Psal.* 73. But marke the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the End of that man is peace, *Psal.* 37. 37. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil: But though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged: yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him, *Eccles.* 8. 11, 12. If not here, yet certainly at last all shall say, Verily there is a Reward for the righteous, *Psal.* 58. 11. Rest therefore in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: Commit your way to him: Trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass: For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever, *Psal.* 9. 18. How happy are you that God doth thus save you from the temptations of prosperity, which you see befool and undo so many before your eyes! and that you are not left in the number of those,

those, that are men of the world, which have their portion in this life! *Psal.* 17. 14. and are given up to their own hearts lusts, to walk in their own counsels, *Psal.* 81. 12. and must hear at last, Remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things] but that here you have your evils, and shall be comforted when the now-prosperous wicked are tormented, *Luke* 16. 25. If heaven be enough to make you a felicity, and Eternity be long enough for your fruition of it, then never think hardly of God for any of his chastisements: *Lazarus* repenteth not there that he was poor: nor *Job* that he was covered with sores, nor *David* that he washed his couch with tears, and that his sore ran and ceased not: The longest of our sorrows will there be reviewed as short in respect of our endless joys; and the sharpest of our pains as *nothing* to those pleasures: *Madam*, experience as well as faith assureth me, that it is good for us that we are afflicted; And though for the sake of others, I shall earnestly beseech the Lord, that he will not unseasonably remove such as you from this unworthy generation; yet I doubt not but your removal, and sufferings in the way, will advantage you for your Everlasting

Rest.

Reſt. And for my ſelf, I deſire, that my lot may ſtill fall with thoſe that follow Chriſt through tribulation, bearing the croſs, and crucified to the world, and waiting for his appearance, deſiring to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord; & not with thoſe that are fed as beaſts for the ſlaughter, and proſper a while in their iniquity, till ſudden deſtruction come upon them, and at laſt their ſins do find them out, when the wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God, *Pſal.* 9.17. *Numb.* 32.23. 1 *Theſ.* 5.3. *Phil.* 3.19. And that theſe words of life may be engraven upon my heart, [Pſal. 63.3. *Thy loving kindneſs is better than life*] Pſal. 73.26. [*My fleſh and my heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever,*] Rom. 8.28. [*All things work together for good to them that love God*] Joh. 14.19. *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.*] Col. 3.3,4. *Our life is hid with Chriſt in God: When Chriſt who is our Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in Glory:*] and that I may be fit for the Title of the Beloved Apoſtle, *Rev.* 1.9. (though as a ſervant to you and the Church of God,)

Your Brother and Companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jeſus Chriſt.

Nov. 1. 1661. *Rich. Baxter.*

To my dearly beloved the Inhabitants of the Burrough and Parish of *Kederminster* in *Worcester-shire*.

AS I never desired any greater preferment in this world, than to have continued in the work of my Ministry among you, so I once thought my days would have been ended in that desired station: But we are unmeet to tell God how he shall dispose of us; or to foreknow what changes he intends to make. Though you are low in the world, and have not the Riches which cause mens estimation with the most, I see no probability that we should have been separated till death, could I but have obtained leave to preach for nothing.

But being forbidden to preach the Gospel in that Diocess, I must thankfully take the liberty which shall anywhere else be vouchsafed me: And while I may enjoy it, I take it not for my duty to be over querulous, though the wound that is made by

my separation from you be very deep. And though to strangers it will seem probable that such severity had never been exercised against me, but for some heynous crime, yet to you that have known me, I shall need to say but little in my defence. The great crime which is openly charged on me, and for which I am thought unworthy to preach the Gospel, (even where there is no other to preach) is a matter that you are unacquainted with, and therefore, as you have heard me publikely accused of it, I am bound to render you such an account as is necessary to your just information and satisfaction.

It pleased the Kings Majesty, (in the prosecution of his most Christian resolution, of uniting his differing subjects by the way of mutual approaches and abatements) to grant a Commission to twelve Bishops and nine assistants on the one side, and to one Bishop and eleven other Divines and nine assistants on the other side, to treat about such alterations of the Liturgie, as are *necessary* to *the satisfying of tender consciences*, and to *the restoring of unity and peace*. My experiences in a former Treaty (for Reconciliation in matter of Discipline) made me intreat those to whom

whom the nomination on the one side was committed, to excuse me from the service which I knew would prove troublesome to my self, and ungrateful to others; but I could not prevail. (But the Work it self, I very much approved, as to be done by fitter and more acceptable persons.) Being commanded by the Kings Commission, I took it to be my duty to be faithful, and to plead for such Alterations as I knew were necessary to the assigned ends; thinking it to be treachery to his Majesty that entrusted us, and to the Church and cause for which we were entrusted, if under pretence of making such Alterations as were necessary to the two forementioned ends, I should have silently yielded to have [*No Alterations*] or [*next to none.*] In the conclusion (when the chief work was done by writing) a Committee of each part, was appointed to manage a Disputation in presence (by writing also.) Therein those of the other part formed an Argument, whose Major proposition was to this sense (for I have no copy) [*Whatsoever book enjoyneth nothing but what is of it self lawful, and by lawful authority, enjoyneth nothing that is sinful*:] We denyed this propolition; and at last gave divers Reasons

of our denyal; among which one was that [*It may be unlawful by Accident, and therefore sinful*] You now know my crime; It is my concurring with learned, reverend Brethren, to give *this Reason* of our denyal of a proposition: Yet *they* are not forbidden to preach for it, (and I hope shall not be;) but only I. You have publikely heard, from a mouth that should speak nothing but the words of Charity, Truth, and Soberness, (especially there) that this was [*a desperate shift that men at the last extremity are forced to*] and inferring [*that then neither God nor man can enjoyn without sin.*] In City and Country this soundeth forth to my reproach. I should take it for an act of clemency to have been smitten professedly for nothing, and that it might not have been thought necessary to afflict me by a defamation, that so I might seem justly afflicted by a prohibition to preach the Gospel. But indeed is there in these words of ours so great a crime? Though we doubted not but they knew that our Assertion made not *Every* evil accident, to be such as made an Imposition unlawful, yet we expresst this by word to them at that time, for fear of being misreported:

and

and I told it to the Right Reverend Bishop when he forbad me to preach, and gave this as a reason: And I must confess I am still guilty of so much weakness, as to be confident that *some things not evil of themselves, may have Accidents so evil, as may make it a sin to him that shall command them.* Is this opinion inconsistent with all Government? Yea I must confess my self guilty of so much greater weakness, as that I thought I should never have found a man on earth, that had the ordinary reason of a man, that had made question of it; yea I shall say more then that which hath offended, viz. *that Whenever the commanding or forbidding of a thing indifferent is like to occasion more hurt than good, and this may be foreseen, the commanding or forbidding it is a sin.* But yet this is not the Assertion that I am chargeable with, but that [*some Accidents there may be that may make the Imposition sinful*;] If I may ask it without accusing others, how would my crime have been denominated if I had said the contrary? Should I not have been judged unmeet to live in any Governed society? It is not unlawful of it self to command out a Navy to Sea: But if it were foreseen that

they would fall into the enemies hands, or were like to perish by any accident, and the necessity of sending them were small, or none, it were a sin to send them. It is not of it self unlawful to sell poyson, or to give a knife to another, or to bid another do it: but if it were foreseen that they will be used to poyson or kill the buyer, it is unlawful; and I think the Law would make him believe it that were guilty. It is not of it self unlawful to light a candle or set fire on a straw; But if it may be foreknown, that by anothers negligence or wilfulness, it is like to set fire on the City, or to give fire to a train and store of Gunpowder, that is under the Parliament house, when the King and Parliament are there: I crave the Bishops pardon, for believing that it were sinfull to do it, or command it: Yea or not to hinder it (in any such case,) when *Qui non vetat peccare cum potest, jubet.* Yea though going to Gods publike worship be of it self so far from being a sin, as that it is a duty, yet I think it is a sin to command it to all in time of a raging pestilence, or when they should be defending the City against the assault of an enemy. It may rather be then a duty to prohibite it. I think *Paul* spake not

not any thing inconsistent with the Government of God or man, when he bid both the Rulers and people of the Church, not to destroy him with their meat for whom Christ dyed: and when he saith that he hath not his Power to destruction, but to Edification. Yea there are Evil Accidents of a thing not evil of it self, that are caused by the Commander: and it is my opinion that they may prove his commad unlawful.

But what need I use any other Instances then that which was the matter of our dispute? Suppose it never so lawful of it self to kneel in the Reception of the Sacrament, if it be imposed by a penalty that is incomparably beyond the proportion of the offence, that penalty is an Accident of the command, and maketh it by accident sinful in the Commander: If a Prince should have Subjects so weak as that all of them thought it a sin against the example of Christ, and the Canons of the general Councils, and many hundred years practice of the Church to kneel in the act of Receiving on the Lords days, if he should make a Law that all should be put to death that would not kneel, when he foreknew that their consciences would command them all, or most of them, to die rather than

obey, would any man deny this command to be unlawful by this accident? Whether the penalty of ejecting Ministers that dare not put away all that kneel, and of casting out all the people that scruple it, from the Church, be too great for such a circumstance, (and so in the rest,) and whether this, with the lamentable state of many congregations, and the divisions that will follow, being all foreseen, do prove the Impositions unlawful which were then in question, is a case that I had then a clearer call to speak to, then I have now. Only I may say that the ejection of the servants of Christ from the Communion of his Church, and of his faithful Ministers from their sacred work, when too many Congregations have none but insufficient or scandalous teachers, or no preaching Ministers at all, will appear a matter of very great moment, in the day of our Accounts, and such as should not be done upon any but a Necessary cause, where the benefit is greater then this hurt (and all the rest) amounts to.

Having given you (to whom I owe it) this account of the cause for which I am forbidden the exercise of my ministry in that Countrey, I now direct these Sermons to

your

your hands, that seeing I cannot teach you as I would, I may teach you as I can. And if I much longer enjoy such liberty as this, it will be much above my expectation.

My dearly beloved, stand fast in the Lord; And *fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings: For the moth shall eate them up like a garment, and the worm shall eate them like wool: but the righteousness of the Lord shall be for ever, and his salvation from generation to generation*, Isa. 51. 7, 8. If I have taught you any doctrine of error or impiety, of disobedience to your Governors in lawful things, of schism or uncharitableness, unlearn them all, and renounce them with penitent detestation: But if otherwise, *I beseech you mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them: For they are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*, Rom. 16. 17. If any shall speak against *Truth* or *Godliness*, remember what you have received; and how little any adversary could say, that ever made such assaults upon you, while I was with you: and that it is easie for any

man

man to talk confidently when no man must contradict him. I denyed no man liberty upon equal terms, to have said his worst against any doctrine that ever I taught you. And how they succeeded, I need not tell you: your own stability tells the world. As you have maintained true Catholicism, and never followed any sect, so I beseech you still maintain the ancient faith, the Love of every member of Christ, and common charity to all, your Loyalty to your King, your peace with all men: And let none draw you from Catholick Unity to a faction, though the declaiming against Faction and Schism should be the device by which they would accomplish it. And as the world is *nothing*, and God is *all*, to all that are sincere believers; so let no worldly interest seem regardable to you, when it stands in any opposition to Christ; but account all *loss* and *dung* for him, *Phil.* 3.8. And if you shall hear that I yet suffer more than I have done, let it not be your discouragement or grief; For I doubt not but it will be my crown and joy: I have found no small consolation, that I have not suffered, for sinful, or for small and indifferent things: And if my pleading against

the

the ejection of the Ministers of Christ, and the excommunicating of his member, for a ceremony, and the divisions of his Church, and the destruction of Charity shall be the cause of my suffering (be it never so great,) it shall as much rejoyce me to be a suffering witness for CHARITY and UNITY, as if I were a Martyr for the Faith. I participate with *Paul* in an *expectation and hope, that Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or death: and as to live will be Christ, so to die will be gain; Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether I ever see you* more, *or be absent* (till the joyful day) *I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God; if to you it shall be given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. 1. 20, 21, 27, 28, 29. But let no injury from inferiors provoke you to dishonour the Governors that God himself hath set over you. *Be meek and patient*; the *Lord is at hand*; *Honour*

all

all men; Love the Brotherhood: Fear God; Honour the King: For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Pet. 2. 15, 17. It is soon enough for you and me, to be justified at the bar of Christ (by himself that hath undertaken it) against all the Calumnies of malicious men. Till then let it seem no greater a matter then indeed it is, to be slandered, vilified or abused by the world. Keep close to him that never faileth you, and maintain your integrity, that he may maintain the joys that none can take from you. Farewel my dear brethren, who are my glory and joy in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming (1 *Thes.* 2. 18, 19.)

Your faithful, though unworthy Pastor,

Nov. 11. 1661.

Rich. Baxter.

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ERRATA.

ERRATA.

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THE Miſchief of *Self-ignorance*, AND Benefit of *Self-acquaintance.*

2 Cor. 13. 5.

Know ye not your own ſelves ——— ?]

THE Corinthians being much abuſed by *falſe-teachers*, to the *corrupting* of their *faith* and *manners*, and the *queſtioning* of the *Apoſtles Miniſtery*, he acquainteth them in my Text with an obvious remedy for both theſe maladies; and lets them know, that their miſcarriages call them to queſtion *themſelves*, rather then to queſtion *his authority or gifts*, and that

 it

if they find *Chriſt* in *themſelves*, they *muſt* acknowledge him in *his miniſtry*.

He therefore firſt moſt importunately urgeth them to the mediate duty of *Self-examination*: [*Examine your ſelves, Whether you be in the faith*: *Prove your own ſelves*:] *Self-examination* is but the *Means* of *Self-knowledge*. This therefore he next urgeth, and that firſt in *General*; and this by way of *Interrogation*, [*Know ye not your own ſelves?*] and then more *particularly* he tells them, *what it is of themſelves*, that it moſt concerneth them to know, [*How that Jeſus Chriſt is in you except ye be Reprobates.*] As if he ſhould ſay, [Alas, poor ſouls, you have more cauſe to queſtion your ſelves then me: Go too therefore, examine and prove your ſelves. It is a ſhame for a man to be ignorant of himſelf. Know ye not your own ſelves? Either Chriſt is in you, by faith, and by his Spirit, or he is not. If he be not, you are yet but Reprobates, that is, diſapproved of God, and at preſent in a forſaken, or condemned ſtate your ſelves; (which is a concluſion that you will be loath to admit, but more concerneth you:) If Chriſt be in you, it was by the means of my miniſtry; and therefore that miniſtry hath been powerfull and effectual to you; and you

you are my witneſſes; the ſeal of my miniſtry is *upon* your *own* ſouls; Chriſt within you, bears me witneſs, and therefore of all men, you have leaſt cauſe to queſtion or quarrel with my miniſtry.]

This Paraphraſe opening all that may ſeem difficult in the Text, I ſhall immediately offer you a double Obſervation, which the words afford us; firſt, as conſidered in themſelves, and then as reſpecting the inference for which they are premiſed by the Apoſtle.

The firſt is, that [*All men ſhould know themſelves*: or, *It is a ſhame for a man to be unacquainted with himſelf.*]

The ſecond is, that [*Not knowing our ſelves is the cauſe of other errors*: or, *The knowledge of our ſelves, would much conduce to the Cure of many other errors.*]

In handling this, I ſhall ſhew you, 1. What it is to know our ſelves. 2. How far it is, or is not, a ſhame to be ignorant of our ſelves. 3. What evils follow this Ignorance of our ſelves, and what benefits ſelf-knowledge would procure. 4. How we ſhould improve this doctrine by Application and Practice. Of the firſt but briefly.

I. *Self-knowledge* is thus diſtinguiſhed according to the object. 1. There is a *Phyſical ſelf knowledge:* when a man knows what he is as a *man*; What his ſoul is, and what his body, and what the compound called *man*. The Doctrine of *Mans Nature*, or this part of Phyſicks, is ſo neceſſary to all, that it is firſt laid down even in the Holy Scriptures, in *Gen. ch.* 1, 2, 3. before his Duty is expreſſed. And it is preſuppoſed in all the moral paſſages of the word, and in all the preaching of the goſpel; The *Subject* is preſuppoſed to the *Adjuncts*. The *Subjects* of Gods Kingdom belong to the *Conſtitution*; and therefore to be known before the Legiſlation, and Judgement, which are the parts of the Adminiſtration. Morality alway preſuppoſeth nature. The *Species* is in order before the ſeparable Accidents. Moſt ridiculouſly therefore doth Ignorance plead for it ſelf againſt Knowledge, in them that *cry* down *this part of Phyſicks*, as *Humane Learning*, unneceſſary to the Diſciples of Chriſt. What excellent holy Meditations of *Humane nature* do you find oft in *Job* and in *Davids Pſalms*, Pſ. 139. concluding in the

the praise of the incomprehensible Creator, ver. 14. [*I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*]

2. There is a *Moral Self-knowledge*, very necessary. And this is, The *knowing* of *our selves* in Relation to *Gods Law*, or to his *Judgement*. The *former* is the *knowledge of our selves* in respect of our *Duty*: the *second*, in respect of the *Reward* or *Punishment*. And both of them have respect to the *Law* of *Nature*, and *Works*, or to the *Remedying Law* of *Grace*.

The *Ethical* knowledge of our selves, or that which respecteth the *Precept* and our *Duty*, is twofold: The first is, as we have *performed* that *Duty*; The second, as we have violated the Law by non-performance or transgression: The first is, the knowledge of our selves as *Good*; the second as *Evil*. And both are either the knowledge of our *Habits* (good or evil) or of our *Acts*; How we are *Morally*, *Inclined*, disposed, or habituated; or what, and how we have *Done*; We must know the *Good estate* of our *Nature* that we were created in; the *Bad estate* of sinfull nature that we are fallen into; the actual sin committed

against the Law of nature; and what sin we have committed against the Law of Grace: and whether we have obeyed the call of the Gospel of salvation, or not. So that as mans state considered Ethically, is threefold, *Institutus, Destitutus, & Restitutus*: *Infirmatus, Deformatus, & Reformatus*; the state of Upright nature; the State of Sin, Original and Actual; and the state of Grace; we must know what we are in respect to every one of these.

And as to the *Judicial* knowledge of our selves, that is, as we stand related to the Promises, and Threatnings, the Judgement, the Reward, and Punishment; we must know first, what is *due to us* according to the *Law of Nature*, and then what is *due to us* according to the tenour of the *Law of Grace*. By *the Law of Nature* or of *Works*, *Death* is the *Due* of fallen mankind; but no man *by it* can lay claim to *Heaven*. All men are under *its curse* or *condemnation*, till *pardoned by Christ*; but no man can be *Justified by it*. By the *Promise of the Gospel*, all *true Believers* renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, are *Justified*, and made the *sons of God*, and *heirs of everlasting glory*. To know whether we are yet *delivered* from the *condemnation of the Law*;

Law; and whether our *sins are pardoned* or *not*; and whether we are the children of God, and have any part in the Heavenly Glory; is much of the *self-knowledge* that is here intended in the Text, and that which most nearly concerneth the solid comfort of our souls.

II. BUt *is all self-ignorance a shame, or dangerous? Answ.* 1. It is *no other* shame then what is common to humane frailty, to be ignorant of much of the mystery of our *Natural Generation, Constitution, Integrall parts, and Temperament.* There is not a *nerve*, or *artery*, or *vein*, nor the bredth of a hand from head to foot, but hath *something unknown* to the most excellent Philosopher on Earth. This little world called *Man*, is a compound of wonders. Both *Soul* and *Body* have afforded matter of endless controversie, and voluminous Disputations, to the most Learned men; which will not admit of a full decision, till we are past this state of darkness and mortality.

2. There are many *Controversies* about the *nature, derivation and punishment of Original sin*, which a humble and diligent Christian

Christian may possibly be ignorant of.

3. The *degrees of Habitual sin*, considered *simply*, or *proportionably* and *respectively* to each other, may be much unknown to many that are willing and diligent to know: And so may divers *actual sins*; such as *we know not to be sin*, through our imperfect understanding of the *Law*; and such as through frailty in a crowd of actions, *escape* our *particular observation*. And the *sinfulness* or *Aggravations* of every sin are but imperfectly known and observed by the best.

4. The *Nature* and *beauty of the Image of God*, as *first planted* on *created man*, and since *Restored* to man *Redeemed*: the *manner* of the *Spirits access*, *operation*, *testimony* and *inhabitation*; are all but imperfectly known by the wisest of Believers.

The *frame* or admirable *composure* or *contexture* of the *New-man* in each of the renewed faculties; the *connexion*, *order*, *beauty* and *special use* of each particular *grace*, are observed but imperfectly by the best.

5. The very *uprightness* and *sincerity* of our *own hearts*, in Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance and Obedience, *is usually unknown* to *Incipients*, or *young beginners* in Religion;

on; and to the *weaker sort of Christians*, how old soever in profession, and to *melancholy persons*, who can have no thoughts of themselves but sad and fearfull, tending to despair; and to *lapsed and declining Christians*; and also to *many an upright soul*, from whom in some *cases of special tryal*, God seems to hide his pleased face. And though these *infirmities* are their *shame*, yet are they not the *Characters* or *Prognosticks* of their misery, and *everlasting* shame.

6. The *same* persons must needs be unacquainted with their *Justification*, *Reconciliation*, *Adoption*, *and Title* to everlasting blessedness, as long as they are uncertain of their *sincerity*. Yea, though they uprightly examine themselves, and desire help of their Guides, and watch and pore continually upon their hearts and wayes, and daily beg of God to acquaint them with their spiritual condition, they may yet be so far unacquainted with it, as to pass an unrighteous judgement on themselves, and condemn themselves when God hath justified them.

But 1. To be *totally ignorant* of the excellency and capacity of your *immortal souls*; 2. To be void of an *effectual knowledge*

ledge of your *ſin* and *miſery*, and *need* of the Remedy; 3. To think you *have ſaving grace*, when you *have none*; that you are *regenerate by the Spirit*, when you are only *ſacramentally regenerate by Baptiſm*; that you are *the members of Chriſt*, when it is no ſuch matter; that you are *Juſtified*, *Adopted*, and the *Heirs* of *Heaven*, when it is *not ſo*; all this is *dolefull* and *damnable unacquaintedneſs* with *yourſelves*.

To be unacquainted with *a ſtate of Life*, when you are *in* ſuch a ſtate, is *ſad* and *troubleſome*, and caſts you upon many and great *inconveniences*. But to be unacquainted with *a ſtate of Death*, when you are *in it*, doth faſten your chains, and hinder your recovery. To be *willing* and *diligent* to *know your ſtate*, and yet be *unable* to attain to aſſurance and ſatisfaction, is ordinary with many true Believers: But to be *ignorant* of it, becauſe you *have no grace to find*, and becauſe you *mind not* the matters of your ſouls, or think it not worth your diligent conſideration or enquiry, this is the caſe of the miſerable deſpiſers of ſalvation.

III. THE *Commodities* and *Incommodities* to be mentioned, are so many and great, that many hours would not serve to open them as they deserve.

1. *Atheism is cherished by self-ignorance.* The knowledge of *our selves as men* doth notably conduce to our *knowledge of God.* Here God is known but *darkly*, and *as in a glass*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. and by *his Image*; and not as *face to face*. And, except his *Incarnate* and his *written word*, what *Glass* revealeth him so clearly as the soul of man? We bear a *double Image* of our Maker: His *Natural Image* in the *nature* of our *faculties*; and his *Moral Image* in their *Holy qualifications*, in the nature of grace, and frame of the new man. By *knowing our selves* it is easie to know, *that there is a God*; and it *much assisteth* us to know, *what he is*, not only in his *Attributes* and *Relations*, but even in the *Trinity* it self. He may easily know that there is a *Primitive Being and Life*, that knoweth he hath himself a *Derived Being and Life*. He *must know* that there is a *Creator*, that knoweth he *is a creature*. He that findeth a *capacious Intellect*, a *Will*, and *Power* in the *creature*, and that

that is conſcious of any *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs* in *himſelf*, may well know that *formaliter* or *eminenter* all theſe are infinite in the *firſt cauſe* that *muſt* thus have in it ſelf what ſoever it doth communicate. He that knoweth that he *made not*, and *preſerveth not himſelf*, may well know that he is *not his Own*, but *his* that made him and preſerveth him, who muſt needs be his *Abſolute Proprietary and Lord.* He that knoweth that he is an *Intellectual free agent*, and therefore to act *Morally*, and therefore to be *moved by Moral means*, and that he is a *ſociable creature*, a *member of the Univerſe*, living among men, may well be ſure, that he is *made to be a ſubject*, and *Governed by Laws*, and *by morall means* to be *directed* and *moved* to his *End:* and therefore that none but his *Abſolute Lord*, the *Infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power*, can be his *Abſolute and Higheſt Soveraign.* He that is convinced that *he is, he lives, he hopeth and enjoyeth all thats good*, from a *Superior Bounty*, may be ſure that *God* is his *Principal Benefactor.* And to be [*The Firſt and Infinite Being, Intellect, Will, and Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Cauſe of all things; the Abſolute Owner, the moſt Righteous Governor, and the moſt Bounteous Benefactor,*]

nefactor,] this is to be [*GOD.*] This being the *Description* of *him* that is *so called*: such a Description as is fetcht from his *Created Image* [*Man*,] and expressed in the terms that *himself* hath *chosen*, and *used* in his *word*, as knowing that if he will be understood *by man*, he must use the Notions and Expressions of *man*: And though these are spoken but *Analogically* of *God*, yet are there *no fitter* conceptions of him that the soul of man in flesh is capable of. So that the Atheist carrieth about him that Impress and Evidence of the Deity, which may convince him, or condemn him for his Foolishness and Impiety. He is a *Fool* indeed, that *saith in his Heart, There is no God* (Psal. 14. 1.) when *that Heart it self* in its *Being*, and *Life*, and *Motion* is *his Witness*: and *Soul* and *Body* with all their faculties, are nothing but the *Effects* of this *Almighty Cause*: And when they prove that *there is a God*, even by *questioning* or *denying* it; being unable *without* him so much as to *deny him*, that is, to *think*, or *speak*, or *be*. As if a fool should write a Volume to prove that *there is no Ink or Paper in the world*; when it is *Ink and Paper* by which he writes.

And

And whether there be no repreſentation of the *Trinity in Unity* in the *Nature of man*, let them judge that have well conſidered, how in *One Body* there are the *Natural, Vital* and *Animal* parts, and ſpirits: And in *One Life* or *Soul*, there are the *Vegetative*, *Senſitive* and *Rational* faculties; And in *One Rational Soul as ſuch*, there are an *Intellect*, *Will*, and *Executive power*, Morally perfected by *Wiſdom*, *Goodneſs* and *Promptitude* to well doing. As in one Sun there is *Light* and *Heat*, and *Moving force*. So that *man* is both the *Beholder* and the *Glaſs*; the *Reader* and the *Book*: He is the *Index* of the Godhead to *himſelf*: Yea, *partly* of the *Trinity in Unity*: Of which ſaith *Auguſt. de Trinit. lib.* 1. [*Nec periculoſius alicubi erratur, nec laborioſius aliquid quæritur, nec fructuoſius invenitur, quam Trinitas.* We need not ſay, *Who ſhall go up into Heaven*: ſaith *Seneca* himſelf by the light of nature, *Prope Deus eſt; tecum eſt: Intus eſt; ſacer intra nos Spiritus; ſed & bonorum malorumq; noſtrorum obſervator & cuſtos: Hic prout à nobis tractatur, ita nos tractat ipſe: Bonus vir ſine Deo nemo eſt.*] *God is nigh us; with us; within us; A holy ſpirit reſideth within us;*

the

the observer of our evil and good, and our preserver: He useth us as he is used by us: no good man is without God.] saith *August.* [*Deus est in seipso sicut α & ω: in mundo sicut rector & author: in Angelis sicut sapor & decor: in Ecclesia sicut paterfamilias in domo: in animo sicut sponsus in thalamo: in justis sicut adjutor & protector: in reprobis, sicut pavor & horror.*] *God is in himself as the* Alpha *and* Omega; *in the world as its Governor and Author: in Angels as their sweetness and comeliness: in the Church as the master of the family in his house: in the soul, as the Bridegroom in his bed-chamber: in the righteous, as their helper and protector,* &c.] And as *all declareth him,* so *all* should *praise him: Hunc itaq; mens diligat, lingua canat, manus scribat atq; in his sanctis studiis fidelis animus se exerceat. Aug.*] *Let the mind be exercised in loving him, the tongue in singing him, the hand in writing him; let these holy studies be the believers work.*]

2. He that *knoweth himself,* may *certainly know, that there is another life of Happiness or Misery for man to live, when this is ended.* For he must needs know that his *soul is capable* of a spiritual and glorious felicity with God, and of immaterial objects

and

and that *time* is as *nothing to it*, and tranſitory creatures afford it no ſatisfaction or Reſt: and that the *Hopes* and *Fears* of the *Life* to come, are the *Divine engines* by which the *Moral Government* of the world is carryed on; and that the very *nature* of *man* is ſuch, as that without ſuch *Apprehenſions*, *Hopes* and *Fears*, he could not in a *connaturall way* be *Governed*, and brought unto the End to which his *Nature* is enclined and adapted; But the *world* would be as a *Wilderneſs*, and *men* as *bruits*. And he may well know that God made not ſuch faculties *in vain*, nor ſuited them to an end which cannot be attained, nor to a work which would prove but their trouble and deceit: He may be ſure that a meer *probability* or *poſſibility* of an *everlaſting Life*, ſhould engage a *reaſonable creature* in all poſſible diligence in Piety & Righteouſneſs & Charity to attaine it: And ſo *Religious and holy endeavours*, are become the *duty* of *man as man*; there being few *ſuch Infidels or Atheiſts* to be found on earth, as dare ſay, *They are ſure there's no other life for man.* And doubtleſs *whatſoever* is by *Nature and Reaſon* made *mans Duty*, is *not deluſory* and *vain:* Nor is it Reaſonable to think that *Falſhood*, *fruſtration* and *deceit*, are the ordinary

ordinary way by which *mankind is Governed* by the *most wise and Holy God*. So that the *end* of man may be clearly gathered from his *Nature*: forasmuch as God doth Certainly suit his workes unto their proper use and ends. It is therefore the *ignorance of our selves* that makes men question the *Immortality of soules:* And I may adde, it is the *Ignorance of the nature of Conscience*, and of *all Morality*, and of the *reason of Justice among men*, that makes men doubt of the *discriminating Justice* of the *Lord*, which is *hereafter* to be manifested.

3. Did *men know themselves*, they would better know the *evill and odiousness of sin*. As *poverty and sickness* are better known by *feeling* then by *heare say:* so also is *sin*. To hear a discourse or read a Booke of the Nature, Prognosticks and Cure of the plague, consumption, or dropsie, doth little affect us, while we seem to be sound and safe our selves: But when we find the maladie, in our *flesh*, and perceive the danger, we have then another manner of knowledge of it. Did you but *see and feele sin as it is in your Hearts* and *lives*, as oft as you *read and heare of it* in the *Law of God*, I dare say

ſin would not ſeeme a jeſting matter, nor would thoſe be cenſured as too preciſe, that are carefull to avoid it, any more then they that are carefull to avoid infectious diſeaſes, or crimes againſt the Lawes of man, that hazzard their temporall felicity or lives.

4. Its want of *ſelf-aquaintance* that keepes the ſoule from *kindly Humiliation*: That men are inſenſible of their Spirituall calamityes, and lie under a load of unpardoned ſin and Gods diſpleaſure, and never feele it, nor loath themſelves for all the abominations of their hearts and lives, nor make complaint to God or man with any ſerioufneſs and ſenſe. How many hearts would be filled with wholſome griefe and care, that now are careleſs and almoſt paſt feeling? and how many eyes would ſtream forth teares that now are dry, if men were but truly acquainted with themſelves? It is *ſelf-knowledge* that cauſeth the ſolid peace and joy of a Believer: as conſcious of that Grace that warranteth his peace and joy: But it is *ſelf-deceit* and ignorance that quieteth the preſumptuous, that walke as careleſſy, and ſleep as quietly, and bleſſe themſelves from Hell as confidently,

when

when it is ready to devoure them, as if the bitterneſs of death were paſt, and hypocriſy would never be diſcoverred.

5. It is *unacquaintednes with themſelves* that makes *Chriſt ſo undervalued* by the unhumbled world: that his *Name is reverenced* but his *office* and *Saving grace* are *diſregarded*. Men could not ſet ſo light by the Phyſicion, that felt their ſicknes, and underſtood their danger. Were you ſenſible that you are under the wrath of God, and ſhall ſhortly and certainly be in Hell, if a Chriſt received by a hearty working, purifying faith, do not deliver you, I dare ſay, you would have more ſerious, ſavory thoughts of Chriſt, more yearnings after him, more fervent prayers for his healing grace, and ſweet remembrance of his love and merits, example, doctrine and ineſtimable benefits, then lifeleſs hypocrites ever were acquainted with.

Imagine with what deſires and expectations the diſeaſed, blind and lame cryed after him for healing to their bodies, when he was on earth. And would you not more highly value him, more importunately ſolicite him for your ſoules, if you knew your ſelves?

6. It is *unacquaintednes with themſelves* that makes men *think ſo unworthily of a Holy Heavenly Converſation*; and that poſſeſſeth them with fooliſh prejudice againſt the holy *Care and diligence* of believers: did men but value their immortall ſouls, *as* Reaſon itſelf requireth them to do, is it poſſible they ſhould venture them ſo eaſily upon everlaſting miſery, and account it unneceſſary ſtrictnes in them that dare not be as deſperately venturous as they, but fly from ſin, and fear the threatnings of the Lord? Did men but conſiderately underſtand the worth and concernment of their ſouls, is it poſſible they ſhould hazard them for a thing of nought, and ſet them at ſaile for the favor of ſuperiors, or the tranſitory pleaſures and honours of the world? Could they thinke the greateſt care and labour of ſo ſhort a life to be too much for the ſecuring of their ſalvation? Could they think ſo many ſtudious carefull dayes, and ſo much toil to be but meet and neceſſary for their bodyes, and yet think all too much that's done, for their immortall ſouls? Did men but *practically know* that they are the *Subjects* of the God of Heaven, they durſt not think the *diligent obeying him* to be a needleſs thing, when they like that

Child

Child or *servant* best, that is *most willing and diligent in their Service.* Alas were men but *acquainted* with *their weakness*, and *sinfull failings* when they have done *their best*, and how much short the hoylest Persons do come of what they are obliged to by the Lawes and mercies of the Lord, they durst not make a scorn of diligence, nor hate or blame men for *endeavouring* to be *better*, that are sure *at best* they shall be *too bad.* When the worst of men, that are themselves the greatest neglecters of God and their salvation, shall cry out against a Holy life and making so much a do for Heaven, (as if a man that lyeth in bed should cry out against working too much or going too fast) this shewes mens strangeness to themselves. Did the careless world but *know themselves*, and see where they stand, and whats before them, and how much lyeth on this inch of time; did they but know the nature and employment of a soul, and why their Creator did place them for a little while in flesh, and whither they must goe when time is ended, you should then see them in that serious frame themselves which formerly they dislikt in others: and they would then confess that if any thing in the

world deſerved ſerioufneſs and diligence, it is the pleaſing of God, and the ſaving of our ſouls.

7. It is for want of *acquaintance with themſelves*, that men are ſo *deceived by the vanityes of the world:* that they are drowned in the love of *pleaſures and ſenſuall delights:* that they are ſo greedy for *Riches*, and ſo deſirous to be *higher* then thoſe about them, and to waſt their dayes in the purſuit of that which will not help them in the houre of their extremity. Did the *voluptuous ſenſualiſt* know aright that he is *a Man*, he would not take up with the pleaſures and felicity of a *bruit*; nor enſlave his *Reaſon* to the violence of his *Appetite*. He would know that there *are higher pleaſures* which beſeem *a Man:* even thoſe that conſiſt in the *well being* and *integrity* of the *ſoule*, in peace of Conſcience, in the favour of God, and Communion with him in the Spirit, and in a holy life, and in the fore-thoughts and Hopes of endleſs Glory.

Did the *Covetous worldling know himſelf*, he would know that it muſt be *another kind of Riches*, that muſt *ſatiſfie his ſoul*, and that he hath wants of *another nature* to be ſupplied; and that it more

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concernneth him to *lay up a treasure in Heaven*, and think where he must dwell for ever, then to accommodate his perishing flesh, and make provision with so much a doe, for a life that posteth away while he is providing for it: he would rather *make him friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness*, and *lay up a foundation for the time to come*, and *labour for the food that never perisheth*, then to make such a stir for that which will serve him so little a while: that so he might hear, [*Well done thou Good and faithfull servant*, &c.] rather then [*Thou foole this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided.*]

Self-knowledge would teach *Ambitious* men, to prefer the *calmest safest* station, before the *highest*; and to *seek first the Kingdom of God* and *its righteousness*, and to please him most carefully that hath the Keyes of Heaven and Hell: and to be content with food and rayment in the way, while they are Ambitious of a higher Glory. It would tell them, that, so dark and fraile a creature should be more solicitous to *Obey* then to have *Dominion*; and that large Possessions are not the most

congru-

congruous or desireable Passage, to a narrow grave; and that it is the highest dignity to be an heire of Heaven. Would men but spend some houres time, in the study of themselves and seriously consider what it is to be a *Man*, a *sinner*, a *Passenger to an endless life*, an *expectant* of so great a change, and withall to be a *professt Believer*, what a turne would it make in the cares, and the desires, and conversations of the most?

O *amatores mundi* (*inquit Augst.*) *cujus rei gratia militatis?* —— *Ibi quid nisi fragile plenum periculis? et per quot pericula pervenitur ad majus periculum? pereant haec omnia, et dimittamus haec vana et inania, conferamus nos ad solam inquisitionem eorum quae finem non habeant.*] i. e. What strive you for, O worldings? Whats here but a brittle glass full of dangers? and by how many dangers must you come to greater dangers? Away with these vanities and toyes, and let us set our selves to seek the things that have no end]

8. It is for want of *self-acquaintance* that *any man is Proud.* Did men *considerately know what they are*, how quickly would it bring them low? Would corruptible

ruptible flesh that must shortly turne to loathsome rottennesse, be *stout* and *Lordly* and look so high and set forth it self in *gawdy ornaments*, if men did not *forget themselves?* Alas, the *way* forgets the *end:* the *outward bravery* forgets the *dirt* and *filth within:* the *stage* forgetteth the *undressing roome.* Did *Rulers* behave themselves as those that are *subjects to the Lord* of *all*, and have the greatest need to feare his judgment, and prepare for their account: did *Great ones* live as men that know that Rich and poore are equall with the Lord, who respects not persons; and that they must Speedily be levelled with the lowest, and their dust be mixed with the Common earth; what an alteration would it make in their deportment and affaires? and what a mercy would it prove to their *inferiours* and *themselves?* If men that swell with *pride of parts*, and overvalue their knowledge, wit or elocution, did know how *little indeed* they *know*, and how much they are ignorant of, it would much abate their pride and confidence. The more men know indeed, the more they know to humble them. It is the *Novises* that *being lifted up with Pride do fall into the Condemnation*

tion of the Devill. 1 Tim. 3. 6. They would loath themſelves if they knew themſelves.

9. It is *ſelf-ignorance* that makes men *ruſh upon Temptations*, and *chooſe them*, when they cuſtomarily pray againſt them. Did you Know what *tinder* or *gunpowder* lodgeth in your *natures*, you would guard your eyes and eares and appetites and be afraid of the leaſt ſpark: you would not be indifferent as to your company nor chuſe a life of danger to your ſouls, for the pleaſing of your fleſh; to live among the ſnares of honour or beauty and bravery, or ſenſuall delights: you would not willfully draw ſo *neare the* brinke of Hell, nor be *nibbling* at the *bait*, nor *looking* on the *forbidden fruit*, nor *dallying* with *allurements*, nor *hearkening* to the Deceiver, or to his meſſengers. It is ignorance of the weakneſs and badneſs of your hearts, that maketh you ſo confident of your ſelves, as to think that you can heare any thing, and ſee any thing, and approach the ſnare, and treat with the Deceiver, without any danger, ſelf-acquaintance would cauſe more feare and ſelf-ſuſpicions.

If you ſhould ſcape well a *while* in your ſelf-

self-chosen dangers, you may catch that at *last* that may prove your wo.

Nemo sese tuto periculis offerre tam crebro potest.
Quem sæpe transit casus, aliquando invenit.
Seneca.

Temptation puts you on a *combate* with the powers of earth, and flesh and Hell! And is *toyl* and *danger* your *delight? Nunquam periculum sine periculo vincitur*] saith *Seneca: Danger is never overcome without danger*; Its *necessary valour* to charge through all, *which you are in:* But its *temerarious foolhardiness* to *seek for danger*, and invite such enemies when we are so weak: Saith *Augustin*; *Nemo sibi proponat & dicat, habere volo quod vincam: hoc est, dicere, vivere desidero & volo sub ruina.*] *Goliah's* [give me man to fight with,] is a prognostick of no good *success*. Rather foresee all your dangers to avoid them. Understand where each temptation lieth, that you may go another way, if possible. *Castitas periclitatur in deliciis, humilitas in divitiis; pietas in negotiis; veritas in multiloquio; charitas in hoc mundo.*] saith *Bern.* [*Chastity is endangered in delights;*

lights: humility in riches; piety in buſineſſes; truth in too much talk; and charity in this world.] Alas did we but think what temptations did with a *Noah*, a *Lot*, a *David*, a *Solomon*, a *Peter*; we would be afraid of the enemy & weapon that ſuch worthies have been ſo wounded by, and of the quickſands where they have ſo dangerouſly fallen. When Satan durſt aſſault the Lord himſelf; What hope will he have of ſuch as we? When we conſider the millions that are blinded, and hardened and damned by temptations, are we in our wits if we will caſt our ſelves into them? [*Præceps eſt, qui tranſire contendit, ubi conſpexerit alios cecidiſſe: Et vehementer infrænis eſt, cui non incutitur timor alio pereunte.* Aug.

10. *Self-acquaintance* would *confute Temptations*, and *eaſily reſolve the caſe* when *you are tempted.* Did you *conſiderately know* the *preciouſneſs of your ſouls*, and your *own concernments*, and where your true felicity lieth, you would *abhor allurements*, and encounter them with that argument of Chriſt, Mark. 8. 36, 37. *What ſhall it profit a man, if he win the world and loſe his ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*] The *fear of man* would be conquered by a *greater fear*; as the

the Lord commandeth, Luke 12. 4, 5. [*And I say unto you, my friends; Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: having But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell: Yea, I say unto you: Fear him.*]

11. It is *unacquaintedness with themselves*, that makes men *quarrell with the word of God*, rejecting it when it suits not with their *deceived reason*, and to be offended with his faithfull Ministers, when they cross them in their opinions or ways, or deal with them with that serious plainness, as the weight of the Case, and their necessity doth require. Alas, Sirs, if you were acquainted with your selves, you would know that the *holy Rule* is *strait*, and the *crookedness* is in *your conceits* and *misapprehensions*; and that *your frail understandings* should rather be inspected then the word of God; and that your work is to *learn and obey the Law*, and not to *censure* it, *James* 4. 11. And that quarrelling with the holy word which you should obey, will not *excuse* but *aggravate* your sin; nor *save* you from the condemnation, but *fasten it* and make

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it *greater*. You would know that it is more wiſdom to ſtoop, then to contend with God: and that it is not your *Phyſitions*, nor the *medicine* that you ſhould fall out with, nor deſire to be delivered from, but the *diſeaſe*.

12. *Self-acquaintance* would teach men to be *Charitable to others*, and cure the common *cenſoriouſneſs*, and *envy*, and *malice* of the world. Hath thy neighbour *ſome miſtakes* about the diſputable points of doctrine, or doubtfull modes of Diſcipline or Worſhip? Is he *for the opinion*, or *form*, or *Policy*, or *Ceremony*, which thou *diſlikeſt*? or is he *againſt them* when thou *approveſt* them? or *afraid to uſe them*, when thou *thinkeſt them laudable*? If thou *know thy ſelf*, thou *dareſt* not break *charity* or *peace* for *this*. Thou *dareſt* not *cenſure* or *deſpiſe* him: But wilt remember the frailty of thy *own underſtanding*, which is not infallible in matters of this rank; and in many things *is certainly miſtaken*, and needs forbearance as well as he. Thou wouldſt be afraid of inviting God or man to condemn thy ſelf, by thy condemning others; and wouldſt think with thy ſelf,

If

If every error of no more importance in persons that hold the Essentials of Religion, and conscionably practise what they know, must go for *Heresie*, or make men *Sectaries*, or cut them off from the *favour of God*, or the *Communion of the Church*, or the *protection of the Magistrate*, and subject them to *damnation*, to *misery*, to *censures* and *reproach*: alas, what then must become of so *frail a wretch as I?* of so dark a mind, of so blameable a heart and life? that am like to be mistaken in matters *as great*, where I *least suspect* it? It is *ignorance of themselves*, that makes men so easily *think ill* of their brethren, and entertain all *hard* or *mis-reports* of them, and look at them so strangely, or speak of them so contemptuously and bitterly, and use them so uncompassionately, because they are not in all things of *their* opinion and way. They consider not *their own* infirmities, and that they teach men how to use *themselves*. The *falls* of brethren would not be *over-aggravated*, nor be the matter of *insulting* or *contempt*, but of *compassion*, if men *knew themselves*. This is implyed in the charge of the Holy Ghost, Gal. 6. 1, 2. [*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of*

of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf leſt thou alſo be tempted : Bear ye one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt.] The *Phariſee* that ſeeth not the *beam* of *mortal formality and hypocriſie* in his *own eye*, is moſt *cenſorious* againſt the *motes* of *tolerable particular errors* in his *brothers eye*. None more uncharitable againſt the real or ſuppoſed errors or ſlips of *ſerious Believers*, then *Hypocrites* that have no ſaving ſerious faith and knowledge, but place their Religion in Opinion and outſide ſhews, and wholly err from the path of Life.

13. It is *ignorance of themſelves* that makes men *Divide the Church of Chriſt*, and pertinaciouſly keep open its bleeding wounds, and hinder Concord, and diſturb its peace. How far would *ſelf-acquaintance* go to the Cure of *all our diſcords and diviſions?* Is it poſſible that the *Pope* ſhould take upon him the *Government of the Antipodes*, even of *all the World*, (and that as to *Spiritual Government*, which requireth more *perſonal attendance*, then *ſecular*,) if he *knew himſelf*, and conſequently his *natural incapacity*, and the terror of his account for ſuch an Uſurped charge? *Self-acquaintance* would *depoſe* their *Inquiſitions*, and

and *quench* their *flames*; and make them *know what spirit they are of*, that inclineth not to *save mens lives*, but to *destroy them*, *Luke* 9. 55, 56. Did they *know themselves*, the *Papists* durst not multiply new Articles of faith, and ceremonies and depart from the ancient simplicity of the Gospel, and turn the Creed or Scripture into all the Volumes of their Councils, and say, *All these decrees or determinations of the Church are necessary to salvation*; and so make the way of life more difficult, if not impossible (had they indeed the Keyes) by multiplying of their supposed Necessaries. Did they but *know themselves aright*, it were impossible they should dare to pass the sentence of damnation on the far greatest part of the Christian world, because they are not subject to their pretended Vice-Christ. Durst one of the most *leprous corrupted sort* of Christians in the world unchurch *all the rest* that will not be as bad as they, & condemn all other Christians as Hereticks or Schismaticks, either for their adhering to the truth or for errors and faults, far smaller then their own? Did they *know themselves* and their *own corruptions*, they *durst not* thus *condemn themselves*, by so presumptuous and blind a *condemnation*, of

the *best* and *greatest* part of the Church of Christ, which is dearest to him, as *purchased by his blood.* If either the *Protestants* or the *Greeks*, or the *Armenians*, *Georgians*, *Syrians*, *Ægyptians*, or *Æthiopian Churches*, be in as bad and dangerous a case as these *Usurping Censurers* tell the world they are, what then will become of the tyrannous, superstitious, polluted, blood-thirsty Church of *Rome*?

What is it but *Self-ignorance* that perverteth the unsetled among us, and sends them over to the *Romane tents*? No man could rationally become a *Papist*, if he *knew himself*. Let me prove this to you in these four Instances.

1. If he had but the *knowledge* of his *Natural senses*, he could not take them to be *all deceived* (and the senses of all others as well as his) about their proper object; and believe the Priests that *Bread is no Bread*, or *Wine is Wine*, when all mens senses testifie the contrary.

2. Some of them turn Papists because they see some differences among other Christians, and hear them call one another by names of contumely and reproach; and therefore they think that such can be no true Churches of Christ: But if they

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knew themselves, they would be acquainted with more culpable errors in *themselves*, then those for which many others are reproached; and see how irrational a thing it is to change their Religion upon the scolding words or slanders of another; or which is worse, upon their own uncharitable censures.

3. Some turn to the Papists as apprehending *their Ceremonious kind of Religion*, to be an easier way to Heaven then ours: But if they knew themselves, they would know that it is a more solid and spiritual sort of food that their nature doth require, and a more searching Physick that must cure their diseases; and that *shells* and *chaff* will not *feed*, but *choak* and *starve* their souls.

4. All that turn Papists must believe, that they *were unjustified and out of the Catholick Church before*, and consequently *void of the Love of God, and special grace*: For they receive it as one of the Romish Articles, that out of their Church there is no salvation. But if these persons were *indeed before ungodly*, if they knew themselves, they would find that there is a greater matter necessary, then *believing in the Pope*, and *turning to that faction*; even to *turn to God*

by faith in Chriſt, without which no opinions or profeſſion can ſave them. But if they *had* the Love of God *before*, then they were *Juſtified* and *in the Church before*; and therefore *Proteſtants* are *of the true Church*, and it is not confined to the Roman ſubjects. So that if they knew this, they *could not turn Papiſts* without a palpable contradiction.

The Papiſts fugitives tell us, we *are no true Miniſters*, nor our *Miniſtery effectual* and bleſt of God. What need we more then imitate *Paul*, when his Miniſtery was accuſed, and call them to the *Knowledge of themſelves* [*Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the faith? Prove your ſelves: Know ye not your own ſelves: how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you except ye be Reprobates?*] If they were *ungodly* and *void of the Love of God*, while they were under *our Miniſtry*, no wonder if they *turn Papiſts*: For its juſt with God that thoſe that *receive not the Love of the truth that they may be ſaved, be given over to ſtrong deluſions to believe a lye*,] 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11. But if they received themſelves the Love of God in our Churches by our Miniſtry, they ſhall be our witneſſes againſt themſelves.

And it is *others* as well as *Papiſts* that would

would be kept from Church divisions, if they did but *know themselves*. *Church Governours* would be afraid of laying *things unnecessary* as *stumbling-blocks* before the *weak* and of laying the *Unity* and *Peace* of the Church upon them; and casting out of the Vineyard of the Lord, and out of their Communion all such as are not in such unnecessary or little things, of their opinion or way. The words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 14.15. so plainly and fully deciding this matter, would not have stood so long in the Bible, as *non-dicta* or utterly *insignificant*, in the eyes of so many Rulers of the Churches, if they had known themselves, as having need of their Brethrens charity and forbearance. [*Him that is weak in the faith receive you; but not to doubtfull disputations: For one believeth that he may eat all things; another that is weak eateth herbs: Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not,* (much less destroy him or excommunicate him) and *let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: For God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth; yea he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one*

day above another; another esteemeth every day alike: let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind. ——— ver. 13. [*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brothers way.* ——— ver. 17. *For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* 18. *For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men.*] Chap. 15. 1. [*We then that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves*] v. 7. [*Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*] *Self-acquaintance* would help men to *understand these precepts*; and be *patient with the weak* when *we our selves* have so much *weakness*; and not to *vex* or *reject* our brethren for little or unnecessary things, lest Christ reject or grieve us that have greater faults.

Self-acquaintance also would do much to heal the *dividing humour of the people*: and instead of separating from all that are not of their mind, they would think themselves more unworthy of the Communion of the Church, then the Church of theirs.

Self-acquaintance makes men tender and com-

compassionate, and cureth a censorious contemptuous mind. It also silenceth passionate contentious disputes, and makes men suspicious of their own understandings, and therefore forbiddeth them intemperately to condemn dissenters. It also teacheth men to submit to the faithfull directions and Conduct of their Pastors; and not to vilifie, forsake and disobey them, as if they were *above* them in understanding, and fitter to be *Guides themselves*; so that in all these respects, it is *Ignorance of themselves* that makes men *troublers of the Church*, and the *Knowledge of themselves* would much remedy it.

14. And it is *Ignorance of themselves* also that makes men *troublers of the State*. A man that doth not *know himself*, is unfit for all society; If he be a *Ruler* he will forget the *Common-good*, and instead of *Clemency* and Justice will violently exercise an *imperious Will*. If he be a *subject*, he will be Censuring the actions of his *Rulers*, when distance and disacquaintance makes him an incompetent Judge. He will think *himself* fitter to *Rule* then *they*, and whatever *they do*, he imagineth that *he* could do *it better*. And hence come suspitions, and murmurings

rings against them, and *Corah's* censures, [*Ye take too much upon you: Are not all the people holy?*] Were men acquainted with *themselves*, their *weaknesses*, their *concernments* and their *duties*, they would rather enquire whether *they obey well*, then whether *their Superiours Rule well*; and would think the *lowest place* to be most *suitable to them*; and would quiet themselves in the discharge of their *own duty*, *making supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all men; for Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*] 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3. It would quiet all the seditions, and tumults of the world, if men were well *acquainted* with themselves.

I confess, seditions seem to rise from a *too great* knowledge and regard of *our selves*, and of our *own* commodity. *Aliquid commune tuum facere, est seditionis & discordiæ principium; To appropriate common benefits to our selves, is the spring of discord and sedition.* But here as in other things *self-seeking* cometh from *self-ignorance*, and tendeth to *self-deceit* and *disappointment*,

pointment. The *End* of contendings answer not the *promises*, that *selfishness* and *passion* make men in the *beginnings*.

Si æterna semper odia mortales agant
Ne cæptus unquam cedat exanimis furor.
Sed arma felix teneat, infelix pereat.
Nihil relinquent bella——— Seneca.

And then,

——*En quo discordia cives*
Perduxit miseros, en queis consevimus agros.

15. *Self-acquaintance* would *end* abundance of *Controversies*, and very much help men to discern the truth. In the Controversie of *Freewill* or *humane power*; to *know our selves* as we are *Men*, would be to know that we *have* the *Natural Power* and *Freedom* consisting in the *self-determining faculty and principle*. To know *our selves as sinfull*, would certifie us how much we *want* of the *Morall Power* which consisteth in *Right inclinations*, and the *Moral Liberty* from vitious dispositions and habits. Would time permit, I might shew it in the instances of Original Corruption, of the Nature of Grace, of Merit, of the Cause of sin, and many other controversies, how much *error* is promoted by the *Ignorance of our selves*. 16 *Self-*

16. *Self-acquaintance* maketh men both *Juſt* and *Mercifull*. One cannot be ſo much as a *Good Neighbour* without it; nor yet a *faithfull friend*. It will teach you to put up injuries, and to forgive; as remembring that *you* are *like* to be injurious *to others*, and certainly *are* daily ſo *to God*; and that it is no great fault thats done againſt ſuch poor unworthy perſons as our ſelves (if it had no higher a reſpect then as to us.) It is *ſuch* only that [*with all lowlineſs, and meekneſs, and long-ſuffering forbear one another in love*] Epheſ. 4. 2. &[*Recompenſe to no man evil for evil*] Rom. 12. 17. & [*be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*] *ver.* 21. He that is drawn to paſſion and *revenge, is overcome*, when he ſeems to *overcome* by that *Revenge*. It teacheth us to forgive, to know that much is forgiven us by Chriſt, or at leaſt, what need we have of ſuch forgiveneſs. Eph. 4.31,32.[*Let all bitterneſs and wrath and anger and clamor and evil ſpeaking be put away from you with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake, hath forgiven you.*]Othatthis leſſon were well learnt.

17. *Self-acquaintance* will teach us the right *eſtimate of all our Mercyes*: When we know

know how unworthy we are of the least; and what it is we principally need; it will teach us *Thankfulness for all*; and teach us *which* of our mercies to *prefer*. Men know not themselves, and their own necessities; and therefore they slight their chiefest mercies, accounting them burdens; and are unthankfull for the rest.

18. *Self-acquaintance* is *necessary* to the *solid Peace and Comfort of the soul*. *Security* and *stupidity* may quiet the *ungodly* for a *while*, and *Self-flattery* may deceive the *Hypocrite* into a *dream* of Heaven. But he that will have a *durable Joy*, must find some *matter of Joy within him*, as the *effects and evidence* of the Love of God, and the *prognosticks* of his *endless love*: To know what Christ hath suffered, and done, and merited, and promised, is to know the *General* and *principal ground* of our Rejoycing; But something is wanting to make it *Peace and Joy to us*, till we find the *fruits* of *his Spirit within us*, without which no man can be his, Rom. 8. 9. Gal. 5. 16, 17, 22, 24, 25. [*If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*; *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another.*]

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the *beſt* and *greateſt* part of the Church of Chriſt, which is deareſt to him, as *purchaſed by his blood.* If either the *Proteſtants* or the *Greeks*, or the *Armenians*, *Georgians*, *Syrians*, *Ægyptians*, or *Æthiopian Churches*, be in as bad and dangerous a caſe as theſe *Uſurping Cenſurers* tell the world they are, what then will become of the tyrannous, ſuperſtitious, polluted, blood-thirſty Church of *Rome*?

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17. *Self-acquaintance* will teach us the right *estimate of all our Mercyes*: When we know

know how unworthy we are of the leaſt; and what it is we principally need; it will teach us *Thankfulneſs for all*; and teach us *which* of our mercies to *prefer*. Men know not themſelves, and their own neceſſities; and therefore they ſlight their chiefeſt mercies, accounting them burdens; and are unthankfull for the reſt.

18. *Self-acquaintance* is *neceſſary* to the *ſolid Peace and Comfort of the ſoul*. *Security* and *ſtupidity* may quiet the *ungodly* for a *while*, and *Self-flattery* may deceive the *Hypocrite* into a *dream* of Heaven. But he that will have a *durable Joy*, muſt find ſome *matter of Joy within him*, as the *effects and evidence* of the Love of God, and the *prognoſticks* of his *endleſs love*: To know what Chriſt hath ſuffered, and done, and merited, and promiſed, is to know the *General* and *principal ground* of our Rejoycing; But ſomething is wanting to make it *Peace and Joy to us*, till we find the *fruits* of *his Spirit within us*, without which no man can be his, Rom. 8. 9. Gal. 5. 16, 17, 22, 24, 25. [*If a man think himſelf to be ſomething when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf*; *But let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoycing in himſelf alone, and not in another.*]

Gal.

Gal. 6, 3, 4. The *seal* and *witness and beginnings of Life*, must be *within you*, if you will know that you *are the Heirs* of Life.

19. *Self-ignorance* causeth men to *misinterpret and repine at the providence of God*, and to be *froward* under his most righteous *judgements*: Because men know not what they have *deserved*, or what they *are*, and what is *good for them*; therefore they know not the *reason* and *intent* of providence: and therefore they quarrell with their Maker, and murmur as if he did them wrong. When *self-acquintance* would teach them to *justifie God* in all his dealings, and resolve the blame of all into *themselves*. The *Nature* of *man* doth teach all the world, when any hurt is done to Societyes or persons, to enquire by whose *Will* as well as by whose *hands*, it was perpetrated; and to resolve all the *Crimes* that are committed in the world unto the *Will* of man, and there to leave the guilt and blame, and not to excuse the Malefactors upon any pretense of the *concurse*, or *predetermination* of the first or any superior *cause*: And to justifie the Judge and executioner that takes away mens lives, or their estates; as long as themselves are proved to *deserve* it. And surely

ſurely the Knowledge of the Nature and Pravity of man, ſhould teach us to deale as equally with God, and finally reſolve all guilt and blame into the *Free* and *Vitiated Will* of man. Humbling *ſelf-knowledge* maketh us ſay with *Job. ch.* 40. 4. *Behold, I am vile, what Shall I anſwer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth:*] and when God is glorifying himſelf on our relations or our ſelves by his judgements, it teacheth us with *Aaron* to *hold our Peace, Lev.* 10. 3. and to ſay with *Eli*, [*It is the Lord; let him do what ſeemeth him good*] 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. And with *David*, 2. *Sam.* 15. 25. [*If I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord he will bring me againe, and ſhow me it, and his habitation: But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him.*] And as the afflicted Church *Mic.* 7. 9. [*I will beare the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.*] Even a *Pharaoh* when affliction hath taught him a little to *know himſelf* will ſay [*The Lord is Righteous, and I and my people are wicked*] *Exod.* 9. 27. when *Rehoboam* and his Princes are humbled, they *ſay* [*The Lord is Righteous*] 2. *Chron.* 12. 6. ſee *Ezr.* 9. 15.

20 Laſt-

20. Laſtly, it is for want of the *Knowledge of ourſelves*, that *precious Time is ſo much loſt*, and *haſtening Death no more prepared for*. Did we carry ſtill about us the ſenſible Knowledge of our *Neceſſity*, our *Mortality* and the *unconceivable change* that's made by *Death*, we ſhould then live as men that are continually *waiting for the coming of their Lord*; and as if we *ſtill* beheld our graves. For wee carry about us, that ſin and *frailty*, ſuch corruptible fleſh, as may tell us of Death as plainly as a Grave or Skeleton. So great ſo unſpeakably neceſſary a work as the ſerious diligent preparation for our end, could not be ſo ſottiſhly neglected by the ungodly, did they throughly and feelingly know what it is to be *a Mortall man*, and what to have *an immortall ſoule*; what it is to be *a ſinner*, and what to *paſs* into an *endleſs life* of Joy or Miſery.

And thus I have ſhewed you ſome of the fruits, both of the *Knowledge* and *Ignorance* of *our ſelves*: even in our Naturall and Morall and Politicall capacityes; (though it be the ſecond that is directly intended in the Text,) which may help you in the Application.

Uſe.

Use.

AND now I may suppose that the best of you all, the most Honourable, the most Learned, the most Religious (of them I dare affirm it) will acknowledge, that I want not sufficient Reason to urge you, with the Question in my Text [*Know yee not your owne selves?*] Judge by the forementioned effects, whether *self-acquaintance*, even in the most weighty and necessary respects, be common among professed Christians. Doth he duely know himself as he is a *man*, that *doubteth of a Deity* whose *Image* is his very essence, (though not the Morall Image that must be produced by renewing Grace)? Or he that doubteth of a *particular Providence*, of which he hath daily and hourly experience? Or he that doubteth of the *Immortality of his soul*, or of the *Life to come*, which is the *end* of his *Creation* and *endowments*, and is legibly engraven on the *Nature* and *faculties* of his *soul?* Do they *Morally* know themselves, that make a *jest of sin*; and make it their *delight?* that bear it as the *lightest burden*, and are not so

so much *humbled* by all the *distempers* and *miseryes* of their *soules*, as they would be by a *leprosie*, an *imprisonment* or *disgrace?* that have as *cold unthankfull thoughts of Christ* and of his *grace* and *benefits* as a sicke stomack of a feast? That complement with him at the doore; but will not be perswaded to let him in; unless he will come upon *their termes*, and will dwell with their *unmortifyed sin*, and be a servant to their flesh, and leave them their worldly prosperity and delights, and save them for these complements and leavings of the flesh, when sin and the world shal cast them off?

Do those men truly know themselves, that think they *need not* the *Spirit* of *Christ* for *Regeneration*, *conversion* and *sanctification*, nor *need not* a *diligent Holy life*, nor to be halfe so carefull and serious for their *salvation*, as they are for a *shadow* of happiness in the *world?* That would without entreaty bestir themselves, if their houses were on fire, or they were drowning in the water, or were assaulted by a thief or enemy; and yet *think* he is *too troublesome* and *Precise* that intreateth them to bestir themselves for *Heaven*, and to quit themselves like men for their Salvation,

on, and to *look about* them and *spare no pains*, for the escaping everlasting misery; when *this is the time, the only time*, when all this must be done, or they are utterly undone for ever.

Do they *know themselves*, and what they want, and what indeed would do them good, that itch after *sensuall beastiall delights*, and *glut* their *flesh*, and please their *appetites* and *lusts*, and wast their time in needless Sports and long for honour and greatness in the world, and study for *preferment* more then for *Salvation*, and think they can never *stand too high* nor *have too much*; As if it were so desireable to fall from the highest pinacle, or to dye forsaken by that, for which they forsook the Lord.

Do our feathred, powdered, gawdy gallants, or our frizled, spotted, wanton dames, understand what it is that they are so proud of, or do so carefully trim up and adorn? Do they know what flesh is, as they would do, if they saw the comlyest of their companions, when hee hath layn a *month* or *twelvemonth* in the *grave*; Do they know *what sin is*, as a *sight of Hell* would make them know, or the *true Beliefe* of such a state? If they *did*, they would

think that *another garb*, doth better beseem such miserable sinners; and that persons in their case have something els to mind and do, then toyishly to spruce up themselves, like handsome pictures for men to look upon; and something els to spend their hours in, then dalliance and complements and unnecessary ornaments; and that the amiable and honourable beauty, and comlines, and worth consisteth in the Holy Image of God, the wisdom and Heavenly endowments of the soul, and in a Heavenly, charitable, righteous conversation, and good works; and not in a curious dress or gawdy attire, which *a foole* may wear as well as a *wise man*, and a *carkass* as well as a *living man*, and a *Dives* that must lie in Hell, when a *Lazarus* may lie in sores and rags.

Do they *know themselves*, that fear *no snares*, but *chuse* the life of greatest temptations and danger to their souls; becaus it is *highest* or hath most provision for the flesh? and that think they can keep in their candle in the greatest storms, and in any company maintain their innocency? And yet cannot understand so much of the will of God

nor of their own Interest and necessity and danger, as to *resist* a temptation *when it comes*, though it offer them but the most inconsiderable trifle, or the most sordid and unmanly lust.

Do they *know themselves*, that are *prying* into *unrevealed things*, and will be *wise*, in matters of Theology *above what is written?* that dare set their shallow brains, and dark unfurnished understandings, against the infallible word of God; and question the truth of it, because it suiteth not with their lame and carnall apprehensions; or because *they* cannot *reconcile* what *seemeth to them* to be *contradiction*: nor answer the objection of every bold and ignorant infidell: In a word, when *God* must not be *God* unless he please them, nor his *word* be *true* unless it be all *within the reach* of them, that never imployed the time and study to understand it, as they do to understand the Books that teach them Languages, Arts, and Sciences, and treat of lower things: And when Scripture truth must be called in question, as oft as an ignorant eye shall read it, or an unlearned graceless person misunderstand it: when *Offenders* that should bewail and reform their *own transgressions*

of the Law shall turn their accusations against *the Law* and call it too precise or strict, and believe and practise no more then stands with their obedience to the Law of sin, and will quarrell with God, when they should humbly learn, and carefully obey him: and *despise* a life of *holy obedience* in stead of *practising* it; and in effect behave themselves as if *they* were fitter to *Rule themselves* and the *world*, then *God is*; and as if it were not *God* but *they*, that should *give the Law* and be the *Judge*; and *God* were the *Subject*, and *man* were *God*. Do you think that sinfull creeping worms, that stand so near the Grave and Hell do *know themselves*, when they *think* or *speak* or *live* at such *rates*, and according to such unreasonable arrogancie? Do they *know themselves*, that *reproach their brethren* for humane frailties, and difference of opinion in modes and circumstances, and errors smaller then *their own*? And that by calling all men Hereticks, Sectaries, or Shismaticks that differ from them, do tempt men to turn Infidells or Papists, and to *take* us *all* for such as we account each other? And that instead of *Receiving the weak in faith* whom *God receiveth*, will rather *cast out* the *faithfullest Laborers*, and *cut off* Christs *living members*

members from his Church, then forbear the *imposing of unnecessary things?* I dare say, were it not for *unacquaintedness with our brethren and our selves*, we should put those in our *bosomes* as the beloved of the Lord, that now we load with censures and titles of reproach: and the *restoring of our charity* would be the *restoring of our Unity*. If *blind men* would make Lawes for the banishment of all that *cannot read the smallest characters*, you would say, they had *forgot themselves*. Nay when men turne *Papists* or *Separatists* and fly from our Churches, to shun those that perhaps are better then themselves, and to get far enough from the smaller faults of others, while they carry with them far greater of their own: when people are apter to accuse the *Church* then *themselves*, and say the Church is unworthy of their Communion rather then that they are unworthy the communion of the the Church, and think no room in the house of God is clean and good enough for them, while they overlook their owne uncleanness; when men endure an hundred *Calumnies* to be spoken of *their brethren*, better then a plain *reprehension* to *themselves*; as if *their*

perſons only would render their actions juſtifyable, and the reprover culpable; Judge whether theſe men are well acquainted with themſelves.

What ſhould we go further in the ſearch; when in all ages and countries of the world the Unmercifullneſs of the Rich, the Murmuring of the poor, the hard uſage by Superiors, the diſobedience of inferiors, the commotions of the ſtate, the wars and rebellions that diſquiet the world, the cruelty covered with pretenſes of Religion, the unthankfullneſs for Mercyes, the murmuring under afflictions, too openly declare that moſt men have *little knowledge of themſelves*; To conclude, when we ſee that none are more ſelf-accuſing and complaining then the *moſt ſincere*, and none more ſelf-juſtifying and confident then the *ungodly* careleſs ſouls, that none walk more *heavily* then many of the heirs of life, and none are *merrier* then many that muſt lie in Hell for ever: that all that a Miniſter can ſay, will not convince *many upright* ones of their *integrity*, nor any ſkill or induſtry or intereſt ſuffice to convince *moſt wicked men* that they are *wicked*; nor if our lives lay on it, we cannot make them ſee the

neceſſity

neceſſity of *Converſion*, nor know their miſery till feeling tell them it is now too late: when ſo many walke *ſadly* and *lamentingly* to *Heaven*; and ſo many goe *fearleſly* and *Preſumptuouſly* to *Hell*, and will *not believe* it till they are *there*; *by all this judge, what work ſelf-ignorance maketh in the world.*

Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν is many a mans *Motto*, that is a ſtranger to himſelf. As the houſe may be *dark* within that hath the ſign of the *ſun* hanging at the *door*. *Multi humilitatis umbram, pauci veritatem ſectantur*, ſaith *Hieron*. A *blind man* may *commend* the *ſun*, and *diſpute* of *Light*. A man may diſcourſe of a country that he knoweth not. Its eaſy to ſay, *Men ſhould know themſelves* and out of the Book or *brain* to ſpeak of the matters of the *Heart*: But *indeed* to *know ourſelves* as *men*, as *ſinners*, as *Chriſtians*, is a Work of greater difficulty, and ſuch as few are well acquainted with: Shall I go a little further in the diſcovery of it?

1. Whence is it that moſt are ſo *unhumbled*; ſo *great and good* in their *own eſteem*; ſo *ſtrange* to *true contrition and ſelf-abhorrence*; but that they are voluntary *ſtrangers to themſelves*? To *loath themſelves for*

sin, to be *little in their own eyes*, to *come to Christ as little children*, is the case of all that know themselves aright, Ezek. 20.43. & 6. 9. Math. 18. 3, 4. 1. Sam. 15. 17. And Christ made *himself of no reputation*, *but took upon him the form of a servant*, and set us pattern of the most wonderfull humiliation that ever was performed, to convince *us* of the necessity of it, that have *sin* to humble us, when he had none. Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Learn of me*; *for I am meek and lowly*, Matthew 11. 28. And one would think, it were a lesson easily learnt by such as we that carry about us within and without, so much sensible matter of humiliation. Saith *Augustin de Verb. Dei.* [*Discite à me, non mundum fabricare, non cuncta visibilia & invisibilia creare, non miracula facere, et mortuos suscitare, sed quoniam mitis sum, & humilis corde*] Had Christ bid us learn of him to *make a world*, to *raise the dead*, and *work miracles*, the lesson had been *strange*: but to be *Meek* and *lowly* is so *suitable* to *our low* condition, that if we *knew ourselves* we could not be otherwise.

To be *holy* without *Humility*, is to be a *man* without the *essentialls of Nature*, or to

to *build* without a *Foundation* [*Quisine humilitate Virtutes congregat, quasi in ventum pulverem portat*] saith *Greg. in Psal.* 3. *Pœnit: It is but carrying dust into the wind, to think to gather commendable qualities without humility. It* is the *contrite heart* that is the *habitation* and *delight* of God on earth; the *acceptable sacrifice*; Isa. 57.15.&66.2.Psal. 51. 17. *Tanto quis vilior Deo, quanto precioſior ſibi: Tanto precioſior Deo, quanto propter eum vilior eſt ſibi*] saith Greg. *Mor. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be brought low.* We must *not overvalue our selves*, if we would have *God esteem us*, we *must be vile and loathed* either in *his eyes* or *our own.* [*Solet esse specificum electorum*, saith *Greg. Mor. quod de se semper sentiunt infra quam sunt, It is specificall to the Elect to think meanlyer of themselves then they are. Recta facere, & inutiles se reputare*, as *Bernard* speaks. But I urge you not to err in your *humility*, nor *humilitatis causâ mentiri*, as August. It were *low enough*, if we were *as low*, in our *own esteem*, as we *are indeed*: which *self-acquaintance* must procure. *Quanto quis minus se videt, tanto minus sibi displicet*; saith *Greg. Et quanto majoris gratiæ lumen percipit, tanto magis reprehensi-*

reprehenſiblem ſe eſſe cognoſcit] *He is leaſt diſpleaſed with himſelf, that leaſt knoweth himſelf: and he that hath the greateſt light of grace, perceiveth moſt in himſelf to be reprehended. Illumination* is the firſt part of *Converſion*, and of the *new creature*: And *ſelf-diſcovery* is not the leaſt part of *Illumination*. There can be no *Salvation* without it, becauſe *no humiliation*. ſaith *Bernard* in *Cantic.* [*ſcio neminem abſque ſui cognitione ſalvari, de qua nimirum mater ſalutis humilitas oritur, & timor Domini.*]

But how rare this is, let experience determine: To have a poor *habitation*, a poore *attire*, and perhaps *of choice* (though that's not uſuall) is much more common then a *humble ſoul*, [*ſed tumet animus, ſub ſqualore habitus, ut Hier.*] *& multo illa deformior eſt ſuperbia, quæ latet ſub quibuſdam ſignis humilitatis, inquit Idem*, It is the moſt ill favoured Pride, that ſtealeth ſome rags of humility to hide its ſhame. And ſaith *Hierom* truly [*Plus eſt animum de poſuiſſe quam cultum: difficilius arrogantia quam auro caremus, autgemmis*,] Its eaſyer to change our clothing then our mind, and to put off a gawdy habit then our ſelf flattering tumifyed hearts. Many a one can live quietly without *gold rings* and *jewells*

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r ſumptuous houſes and attendance, that annot live quietly without the *eſteem* and *pplauſe of men*, nor endure to be *accounted* s indeed *he is*. Saith *Ambroſe*, *Qui pauperate contentus eſt, non eſt contentus injuria. —— Et qui poteſt adminiſtrationes contemnere, dolet ſibi aliquem honorificentia eſſe præntum.*]

O therefore as you would eſcape Divine ontempt and themoſt deſperate precipitation, *know your ſelves*. For that which *caſt* Angells out of Heaven, will *keep* you out, if t prevail. As *Hugo* acutely ſaith, *Superbia in cœlo nata eſt, ſed immemor qua via inde cecidit, illuc poſtea redire non potuit*] *Pride was bred in Heaven* (no otherwiſe then as Death, in Life) *but can never hit the way hither again, from whence it fell*. Open the windows of our breaſt to the *Goſpell-light*, to the *Laws conviction*, to the *light of reaſon*, and then be *unhumbled* if you can. [*Quare enim ſuperbit cinis & terra?* ſaith *Origen: oblitus quid erit, & quam fragili vaſculo contineatur, & quibus ſtercoribus immerſus ſit, & qualia ſemper purgamenta de ſua carne projiciat*] *Nature* is *low*, but ſin and wrath are the matter of our *great humiliation*, *that* have made us *miſerably lower*.

2. The

2. The abounding of *Hypocriſie* ſhoweth how little men are acquainted with themſelves. I ſpeak not here of that *groſs* Hypocriſie which is allwayes known to him that hath it, but of that *cloſe* Hypocriſie, which is *A profeſſing to be what we are not*, or to *believe* what we *believe not*, or to *have* what we *have not*, or to *do* what we *do not*. What *Article of the faith* do not moſt among us confidently *profeſs?* What *Petition of the Lords prayer* will they not put up? Which of the *Commandements* will they *not profeſs* their obedience to? While the ſtream of their converſation teſtifieth, that in their *hearts* there is none of the *Belief*, the *Deſire*, or the *Obedience* in *ſincerity* which they profeſs. Did they *know themſelves*, they would be aſhamed of the vanity of their profeſſion, and of the miſerable want of the things profeſſed; and that God who is ſo nigh their mouths is ſo far from their hearts. If you heard an illiterate man profeſs, that he underſtandeth all the Languages and Sciences, or a beggar boaſting of his wealth, or a parrot taught to ſay that he is a Man; would you take any of theſe to be the words of one that *knows himſelf?* *Quid eſt vita Hypocritæ* (*inquit Gregor.*)

niſi

nisi quædam visio phantasmatis, quæ hic ostendit in imagine, quod non habet in veritate? Sure they are in the *dark* that spend their days in *dreaming visions*: But they have their eyes so much on the *beholders*, that they have no leisure to peruse *themselves*: They are so carefull to be *esteemed good*, that they are careless of *being* what they *seem*. *Quo magis exterius hominibus placeant, eo se interius aspicere negligunt, totoque se in verbis proximorum fundunt, & sanctos se esse æstimant, quia sic se haberi ab hominibus pensant, ut Gregor. Mor.*

Especially if they *practise* not the vitious *inclinations* of their *hearts*, they think they *have not* the vice they *practise not*, and that the *Root* is *dead* because it's *winter*: when it is the absence of *temptations* and *occasions*, and not of *vitious habits*, or *inclinations*, that smooths their lives with seeming innocencie, and keeps their sins from breaking forth to their own or others observation. *Multorum, quæ innocentia illa sunt, latent vitia*, saith *Seneca*; *instrumenta illis explicandæ nequitiæ desunt. Sic tuto serpens pestifer tractatur, dum riget frigore; non desunt tamen illi venena, sed torpent: ita multorum crudelitas, luxuria*

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& ambitio] *The feeble vices of many lie hid: there are wanting instruments of drawing forth their wickedness. So a poysonous serpent may be safely handled, while he is stiff with cold, and yet it is not because he hath no venome, but because its stupifyed: so is it with the cruelty, luxurie and ambition of many.*] The *knowledge of your selves* is the bringing in of light into your souls, which will awaken you from the hypocrites dream, and make such *apparitions* vanish. Come near this *fire*, and the *paint* of *hypocrisie* will melt away.

3. The common *impatience of plain reproof, and the love of flattery*, shews us how much *self-ignorance* doth abound. Most men love those that *have the highest estimation of them*, be it *true* or *false*. They are seldom offended with any for overvaluing them. They desire not much to be accounted *Well* when they are *Sick*, nor *Rich* when they are *Poor*; but to be accounted *wise* though they are *foolish*, and *godly* when they are *ungodly*, and *honest & faithfull* when they are *deceitfull* and *corrupt*, this is a courtesie that you must not deny them: they take it for their due: They'l never call you Hereticks for such Errors as these: And why is it, but because they err themselves

ſelves, about themſelves, and therefore would have others do ſo too.

Nimis perverſe ſeipſum amat, qui & alios vult errare, ut error ſuus lateat: ſaith *Auguſt. He too perverſly loveth himſelf, that would have others err to hide his error.* A wiſe man *loveth himſelf ſo well*, that he would not be *flattered into Hell*, nor die as *Siſera* or *Sampſon*, by good words, as the harbingers of his wo. He loveth his *Health ſo well*, that he thinks not the ſweetneſs or colour of the fruit, a motive ſufficient to encourage him to a ſurfeit. He loveth *ingenuous Penitence* ſo well, that he cannot love the *flatterers voice*, that *contradicteth it. Faithfull reprovers* are the *meſſengers of Chriſt*, that call us to *Repentance*, that is, to *Life*: *Unfaithfull flatterers* are the meſſengers of the *Devil*, to keep us *from Repentance*, and harden us in impenitency, unto *Death:* If we *know our ſelves*, we ſhall know that when we are over-loved and over-praiſed as being more learned, wiſe, or holy then we are, it is not *we* that are *loved* and *praiſed*; for we are not ſuch as that Love or praiſe ſuppoſeth us to be. Saith *Auguſt.* [*Vos qui me multum diligitis, ſi talem me aſſeritis, ut nunquam me in ſcriptis meis erraſſe dicatis,*

dicatis, fruſtra laboratis; non bonam cauſſam ſuſcepiſtis: facile in eo, me ipſo judice, ſuperamini. Quoniam non mihi placet, cum à chariſſimis talis eſſe exiſtimor, qualis non ſum. Profectò non me, ſed pro me alium ſub meo nomine diligunt; ſi non quod ſum, ſed quod non ſum diligunt.] It pleaſed him not to be accounted *unerring* in his writings, and to be taken by his friends *to be* what he *was* not; which is not to *love him*, but *another* under his name. He that *knoweth himſelf*, perceiveth how much of the Commendation is his *due*, and how much he can lay juſt claim to: and knoweth it is a *diſhonour* to *own the honour* that is *not his own*. He loves not to be *belyed* by a *praiſer*, any more then by a *diſpraiſer*; leſt *Truth* and *He* be both abuſed. Vices, like Worms, are bred and crawl in the inward parts, unſeen, unfelt of him, that carrieth them about him: And therefore by the ſweet meats of flattery and ſenſuality they are ignorantly fed: But its bitter medicines that muſt kill them: which thoſe only will endure, that *know they have them*, and what they are. [*Lenocinantur dulcia delictis: auſtera vero & fortia virtutibus ſunt amica.*] *You ſpeak bitterly*, ſaith the impatient ſinner to the plain reprover, but ſuch are *ſweet and excellent*

excellent men that medle not with the sore. But its *bitter* things that are *wholsom* to your souls; that *befriend* your vertues, and kill the worms of your corruption, which sweet things cherish, saith *Hierom in Eccles.* [*Si cujus sermo non pungit, sed oblectationem facit audientibus, ille sermo non est sapiens, Sermons not piercing, but pleasing, are not wise.* But, alas, men follow the *Appetite* of their *vices*, not only in chusing their meat, and drink and company and recreations, but also in the choice of the *Church* that they will hold communion with, and the *Preachers*, that they will hear: and they will have the *sweet*, and that which their corruption loveth, come on't what will. [*Libenter enim quod delectat, audimus, & offendit omne, quod nolumus,*] saith *Hierom:* Nay, *Pride* hath got so great dominion that *flattery* goeth for due *civility*; and he is accounted *Cynical* or *morose* that useth it not. To call men *as they are* (even when we have a call to do it) or to tell them of their faults with necessary freedom, though with the greatest love and caution and deprecation of offence, is a thing that most, especially great ones, cannot digest: A man is supposed to *rail*, that speaketh *without flatte-*

ry; and to reproach them that would save them from their sins. Saith *Hierom* [*Adeo regnat vitium adulationis, quodque est gravissimum, quia humilitatis ac benevolentiæ loco ducitur, ita fit ut qui adulari nescit, aut invidus, aut superbus reputetur.*] that is, [*the vice of flattery now so reigneth, and which is worst, goeth under the name of humility and good will, that he that knoweth not how to flatter, is reputed envious or proud.*] Indeed some men have the wit to hate a *feigned Hypocritical flatterer*, and also modestly to take on them to disown the excessive commendations of a friend: But these *mistaken friendly flatterers* do seldom displease men at the heart. [*Quanquam respondeamus nos indignos, & caliginis rubor ora perfundat, tamen ad laudem suam anima intrinsecus lætatur*, Hieron.] *We can say We are unworthy, and modestly blush; but within, the heart is glad at its own commendation.*] Saith *Seneca* [*Cito nobis placemus, si invenimus, qui nos bonos viros dicant, qui prudentes, qui sanctos: Non sumus modica laudatione contenti; quicquid in nos adulatio sine pudore congessit, tanquam debitum prendimus: optimos nos esse & sanctissimos affirmantibus assentimur, cum sciamus sæpe illos mentiri:*] that is, [*We soon please*

our

our selves to meet with those that call us good men, wise and holy: And we are not content with a little praise: Whatever flattery heapeth on us without shame, we lay hold on it as due; we assent to them that say we are the best and most holy, when we oft times know our selves that they lie.] All this is for want of the true *knowledge of themselves.* When God hath acquainted a sinner effectually with *himself*, he quickly calleth himself by other names, then flatterers do: With *Paul* he saith, [*We our selves were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures*, Tit. 3. 3.] And *Act.* 26. 11. that he was mad against the Saints in persecuting them. He then speaks so much against himself, that if tender Ministers and experienced friends, did not think better of him then he of himself, and perswade him to more confortable thoughts, he would be ready to despair, and think himself unworthy to live upon the earth.

4. Judge also how well men *know themselves*, when you have observed, *what different apprehensions they have, of their own faults and of other mens: and of those that are suitable to their dispositions, interests or examples, and those that are against them.* They seem to judge of the *actions* by the

perſons, and not of the *perſons* by the *actions*. Though he be himſelf a ſenſualiſt, a worldling, drowned in Ambition and Pride, whoſe heart is turned away from God, and utterly ſtrange to the myſterie of Regeneration and a heavenly life, yet all this is ſcarce diſcerned by him, and is little troubleſome, and leſs odious then the *failings* of another, whoſe heart and life is devoted unto God. The *different opinions*, or *modes* and *circumſtances* of worſhip, in another that truly feareth God, is matter of their ſeverer cenſures and reproach, then their own *omiſſions*, and *averſneſs* and *enmity* to holineſs, and the dominion of their deadly ſins. It ſeems to them more intolerable for another to pray without a Book, then for themſelves to pray without any ſerious belief, or love, or holy deſire, without any feeling of their ſins, or miſery or wants; that is, to pray with the lips without a heart; to pray to God without God, even without the knowledge or love of God, and to pray without prayers. It ſeemed to the Hypocritical Phariſees, a greater crime in Chriſt and his Diſciples, to violate their *Traditions*, in not waſhing before they eat, to break the Ceremonious reſt of their Sabbath by healing the diſeaſed,

eased, or plucking ears of corn, then in themselves to hate and persecute the true believers and worshippers of God, and to kill the Lord of life himself. They censured the Samaritans for not worshipping at *Jerusalem:* but censured not themselves for not worshipping *God, that is a Spirit, in Spirit and in Truth.* Which makes me remember the course of their successors, the Ceremonious Papists; that condemn others for Hereticks, and fry them in the flames, for not believing that *Bread* is *no Bread*, and *Wine* is *no Wine*, and that *Bread* is to be *adored as God*; and that the souls of dead men know the hearts of all that pray to them in the world at once; and that the Pope is the Vice-Christ, and Soveraign of all the Christians in the world; and for reading the Scriptures and praying in a known tongue, when they forbid it; and for not observing a world of Ceremonies; when all this enmity to Reason, Piety, Charity, Humanity, all their Religious Tyranny, Hypocrisie, and Cruelty, do seem but holy zeal and laudable in themselves. To lie, dissemble, forswear, depose and murder Princes, is a smaller matter to them when the Pope dispenseth with it, and when it

tends to the advantage of their faction, which they call *the Church*, then to eat fleſh on *Friday* or in *Lent*, to neglect the Maſs, or Images, or Croſſing, *&c.*

And it makes me remember Biſhop *Halls* Deſcription of *An Hypocrite* [*He turneth all gnats into Camells, and cares not to undo the world for a circumſtance. Fleſh on* Friday *is more abominable to him, then his neighbours bed: He abhors more not to uncover at the name of Jeſus, then to ſwear by name of God,* &c.] It ſeems, that Prelats were guilty of this in *Bernards* dayes, who ſaith, [*Prelati noſtri calicem linquunt, & Camelum deglutiunt: dum majora permittentes, minora diſcutiunt. Optimi rerum æſtimatores, qui magnum in minimis, & parvam aut nullam in maximis adhibent diligentiam.*] i. e. [*Our Prelats ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a Camel, while permitting greater matters, they diſcuſs* (or ſift) *the leſs: Excellent eſtimators of things indeed, that in the ſmalleſt matters imploy great diligence; but in the greateſt, little or none at all.*] And the cauſe of all this partiality is, that *Men are unacquainted with themſelves.* They love and cheriſh the ſame corruptions in themſelves, which they ſhould hate and reprehend in others. And

ſaith

saith *Hierom* [*Quomodo potest præses Ecclesiæ auferre malum de medio ejus, qui in delictum simile corruerit? aut qua libertate corripere peccantem potest, cum tacitus ipse sibi respondeat, eadem se admisisse quæ corripit:*] i. e. [*How can a Prelat of the Church, reform the evil that is in it, that rusheth into the like offence? Or with what freedom, can he rebuke a sinner, when his conscience secretly tells him, that he hath himself committed the same faults which he reproveth?*]

Would men but first be *acquainted with themselves*, and pass an impartial judgement on the affections and actions that are *nearest* them, and that *most concern* them, they would be more competent, and more compassionate Judges of their brethren, that are now so hardly used by them. Its excellent advice that *Austin* gives us, *Quum aliquem reprehendere nos necessitas coegerit, cogitemus, utrum tale sit vitium, quod nunquam habuimus; & tunc cogitemus nos homines esse, & habere potuisse, vel quod tale habuimus & jam non habemus; & tunc memoria tangat communis fragilitatis, ut illam correctionem non odium sed misericordia præcedat: Sin autem invenerimus nos in eodem vitio esse, non objurgemus, sed ingemiscamus*

miſcamus, & ad æqualiter deponendum invitemus.] i. e. [*When neceſſity conſtraineth us to reprove any one, let us think whether it be ſuch a vice as we never had our ſelves: and then let us think that we are men, and might have had it: Or if we once had ſuch but have not now, then let the remembrance of common frailty touch us, that compaſſion and not hatred may lead the way to our reproof: But if we find that we have the ſame vice our ſelves, let us not chide, but groan, and move* (or deſire) *that we may both equally lay it by.*]

5. It ſhews how little men *know themſelves*, when *they muſt needs be the Rule to all other men, as far as they are able to command it; and that in the matters that mens ſalvation dependeth on*, and in the *ſmalleſt, tender, diſputable points*; and even in thoſe things where themſelves are moſt unfit to judge. In every controverted point of doctrine, (though ſuch as others have much better ſtudied then themſelves) he that hath ſtrength to ſuppreſs all thoſe that differ from him, muſt ordinarily be the umpire; ſo is it even in the modes and circumſtances of Worſhip. Perhaps Chriſt may have the honour to be *called* the *King of the Church*, and the *Scripture* have the honour

to

to be *called his Laws:* but *indeed* it is *they* that would be the *Lords* themselves; and it is their *Wills* and *Words* that must be the *Laws*; and this under pretence of subserving Christ, and interpreting his Laws; when they have talkt the utmost for Councils, Fathers, Church, Tradition, it is *themselves* that indeed must be all these; for nothing but their own conceits and Wills must go for the *sense* of Decrees, or Canons, Fathers or Tradition. Even they that hate the power and serious practice of Religion, would fain be the Rule of Religion to all others: And they that never knew what it was to worship God *in Spirit and truth*, with delight and love and suitableness of soul, would needs be the Rule of Worship to all others, even in the smallest Circumstances and Ceremonies. And they would be the Governors of the Church, or the Determiners of its mode of Government, that never would be brought under the Government of Christ themselves. If it *please them* better to spend the Lords day in Plays or Sports, or complement or idleness, then in learning the will of God in his word, or worshipping him, and begging his mercy and salvation, and seriously preparing for an endless

life,

life, they would have *all others* do the like. If *their full ſouls loathe the honey comb*, and they are *aweary* of being inſtructed above an hour, or twice a day; they would have all others *forced* to *their meaſure*, that *they* may *ſeem* as *diligent* as *others*, when *others* are *compelled* to be as *negligent* as *they*. Like a queaſie-ſtomackt Lady, that can eat but one ſllender meal a day, and therefore would have all her ſervants and tenants eat no more, or if they do, accuſeth them of exceſs. If the Emperor of *Conſtantinople* make a Law, that no ſubject ſhall be ſuffered in his dominions, that will not be conformable to him in time, and quality and meaſure, for meats and drink, and ſleep, and ſpeech, and exerciſe; it would be an honourable miſery, and uniform calamity and ruine to his ſubjects. Alas, did men but *know themſelves*, the *weakneſs* of their *underſtandings*, the *ſinful byas* that perſonal intereſt and carnal inclinations have ſet upon their *wills*, they would be leſs arrogant and more compaſſionate, and not think by making themſelves as Gods, to reduce the unavoidable diverſities that will be found among mankind, to a Unity in Conformity to *their minds* and *wills*, and that in the matters of *God* and of *Salvation*;

Salvation ; where every mans conſcience hat is wiſe and faithful, will be tenacious of *double intereſt* (of *God* and of his *Soul*) vhich he cannot ſacrifice to the will of any. But be ſo juſt as not to miſtake and miſre-port me in all this ; as if I pleaded for li-bertiniſm or diſorder, or ſpoke againſt Government Civil or Eccleſiaſtical; when t is only private Ambition, uncharitable-neſs, and cruelty ; and Papall uſurpations over the Church and conſciences of men, hat I am ſpeaking of ; which men, I am ure, will have other thoughts of, when God hath made them *know themſelves*, then hey have while paſſion hindreth them rom knowing what ſpirit they are of: They will then ſee, that the weak in faith ſhould have been received ; and that Catholick Unity is only to be founded in the Uni-verſal Head, and End, and Rule.

6. The dreadfull *change thats made upon mens minds, when miſery or approaching death awakes them*, doth ſhew how little they *knew themſelves before*. If they have taken the true eſtimate of *themſelves* in their *proſperity*, how come they to be ſo much *changed* in *adverſity*? Why do they begin then to cry out of their ſins, and of the folly of their worldlineſs and ſenſua-lity;

lity; and of the vanity of the honours and pleaſures of this life? Why do they then begin to wiſh, with gripes of conſcience, that they had better ſpent their precious time, and minded more the matters of eternity, and taken the courſe as thoſe did whom they once derided, as making more ado then needs? Why do they then tremble under the apprehenſions of their unreadineſs to die, and to appear before the dreadfull God, when *formerly* ſuch thoughts did little trouble them? *Now* there is no ſuch ſenſe of their ſin or danger upon their hearts. Who is it *now* that ever hears ſuch lamentations and ſelf-accuſations from them, as *then* its likely will be heard? The ſame man that then will wiſh with *Balaam*, that he might *die the death of the righteous, and that his latter end might be as his*, will *now* deſpiſe and grieve the righteous. The ſame man that then will paſſionately wiſh that he had ſpent his days in holy preparations for his change, and lived as ſtrictly as the beſt about him, is now ſo much of another mind, that he perceives no need of all this diligence; but thinks it is humorous or timerous ſuperſtition, or at leaſt that he may do well enough without it. The ſame man that will then

cry

cry [*Mercy, Mercy, O Mercy Lord, to a departing soul, thats loaden with sin, and trembleth under the fear of thy judgement,*] s *now* perhaps an enemy to serious earnest prayer, and hates the families and persons that most use it; or at least is prayerless, or cold and dull himself in his desires, and can shut up all with a few careless customary words, and feel no pinching necessity to awaken him, importunately to cry and strive with God. Doth not all this shew that men are befooled by prosperity, and *unacquainted* with *themselves*, till danger or calamity call them to the bar, and force them better to *know themselves?*

Your *mutability* proveth your *ignorance* and *mistakes*. If indeed your case be *now* as good as your present confidence or security do import, lament it not in your *adversity*: fear it not when Death is calling you to the bar of the impartial Judge! Cry not out then of your ungodliness and ensuality: of your trifling hypocrisie, your sleight contemptuous thoughts of God, and of your casting away your Hopes of Heaven, by wilfull negligence and delayes! If you are sure that you are *now* in the right, and diligent serious believers in the *wrong*, *then* stand to it before the Lord:

set

ſet a good face on your cauſe if it be *good*; Be not down in the mouth when it is tried: God will do you no wong: If your cauſe be good, he will ſurely juſtifie you, and will not mar it: Wiſh not to dye the death of the Righteous: ſay not to them, *Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out:* Mat. 25. 8. If all their Care, and Love and Labour, in *ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God and its Righteouſneſs*, be a *needleſs thing*, wiſh not for it in your extremity, but call it *needleſs* then. If fervent prayer may be ſpared *now*, while prayer may be heard, and a few lifeleſs words that you have learnt by rote may ſerve the turn, then call not on God when anſwering is paſt, ſeek him not when he will not be found, *Prov.* 1. 27, 28. *When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh come upon you.*] Cry not [*Lord, Lord open unto us*] when the *door is ſhut. Matth.* 25. 10, 11. Call them not [*fooliſh*] then that *ſlept*, but them that *watcht*, if Chriſt was miſtaken, and you are in the right, *Matth* 25. 2, 8. *Prov.* 1. 22.

O Sirs, ſtand but at the bed-ſide of one of theſe ungodly careleſs men, and hear what he ſaith of his former life, of his approaching

roaching change, of a Holy or a carnal ourse, whether a Heavenly or Worldly life better, (unless God have left him to that eplorate stupidity, which an hours time vill put an end to) Hearken then whether e think that God or the world, Heaven or arth, Soul or body be more worthy of nans chiefest care and diligence; and then udge whether such men did *know themselves* n their *health* and *pride*, when all this talk vould have been *derided* by them as *too precise*, and such a life accounted *over-strict* and *needless*, as *then* they are *approving* and *wishing* they had lived: When that Minister or riend should have once been taken for ensorious, abusive, self-conceited and unsufferable, that would have talkt of them n that language as when Death approacheth, they talk of *themselves*; or would nave spoke as plainly, and hardly of them, as they will then do of *themselves*. Doth not this *mutability* shew how few men now nave a true *knowledge of themselves*?

What is the *Repentance* of the living, and the *Desperation* of the damned, but a declaration that the persons *Repenting* and *Despairing*, were unacquainted with themselves before? Indeed the *erroneous Despair* of men while Grace is offered them, comes from

from *Ignorance* of the *Mercy of God*, and willingneſs of Chriſt to receive all that are willing to return: But yet the ſenſe of ſin and miſery, that *occaſioneth* this *erroneous Deſpair*, doth ſhew that men were *before erroneous* in their preſumption and ſelf-eſteem. Saith *Bernard* in *Cant.* [*Utraque Cognitio, Dei ſcilicet & tui, tibi neceſſaria eſt ad ſalutem, quia ſicut ex notitia tui venit in te timor Dei, atque ex Dei notitia itidem amor; ſic è contra, de ignorantia tui ſuperbia, ac de Dei ignorantia venit deſperatio*] that is, [*Both the knowledge of God and of thy ſelf is neceſſary to ſalvation; becauſe as from the Knowledge of thy ſelf, the Fear of God cometh into thee, and Love from the knowledge of God: ſo on the contrary, from the Ignorance of thy ſelf cometh pride, and from the Ignorance of God comes Deſperation.*] *Quid eſt ſapientia* (*inquit* Seneca?) *Semper idem Velle, & idem Nolle: At non poteſt idem ſemper placere niſi rectum*] *Wiſdom appeareth in alwayes Willing, and alwayes Nilling the ſame thing: but its only Right and Good that can alwayes pleaſe.*

Poor men that *muſt confeſs* their ſin and miſery at laſt, would ſhew a more *ſeaſonable acquaintance with themſelves*, if they would do it *now*, and ſay with the Prodigal, [*I will*

Will go to my Father and say to him, Father I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.] In *time* this Knowledge, & confession may be saving. Even a *Seneca* could say, without the Scripture [*Initium est salutis, notitia peccati; Nam qui peccare se nescit, corrigi non vult. Ideo quantum potes, teipsum argue. Inquire in te: accusatoris primũ partibus fungere; deinde judicis; novissime deprecatoris.*] i.e. [*The knowledge of sin, is the beginning of recovery* (or health:) *For he that knows not that he sinneth, will not be corrected. Reprehend thy self therefore as much as thou canst. Inquire into thy self: First play the part of an Accuser, then of a Judge: and lastly of one that asketh pardon.*]

It is not because men are *Innocent* or *Safe*, that we now hear so little confession or complaint: but because they are *sinfull* and *miserable* in so great a measure, as not to Know or Feel it: [*Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur* (*inquit* Seneca?) *Quia etiam nunc in illis est. Somnium narrare, vigilantis est; & vitia sua confiteri, sanitatis judicium est.*] i. e. [*Why doth no man confess his vices? Because he is yet in them. To tell his dreams is the part of a man that is awake: and to confess his faults,*

is a ſign of health.] If you call a *Poor* man *Rich*, or a *deformed* perſon *beautifull*, or a *vile ungodly* perſon *vertuous*, or an *ignorant* Barbarian *learned*, will not the hearers think, you do not *know them?* And how ſhould they think better of your *knowledge* of *your ſelves*, if any of you that are yet in the *fleſh*, will ſay you are *ſpiritual?* and thoſe that hate the *Holineſs*, and *Juſtice*, and *Government* of God, will ſay they *love him?* or thoſe that are in a ſtate of Enmity to God, and are as near to Hell, as the Execution is to the Sentence of the Law, will perſwade themſelves and others, that they are the Members of Chriſt, the children of God, and the heirs of Heaven? and take it ill of any that would queſtion it, though only to perſwade them to make it ſure, and to take heed what they truſt to, when endleſs Joy or Miſery muſt be the iſſue?

7. Doth it not manifeſt how little men *know themſelves*, when in *every ſuffering that befals them, they overlook the Cauſe of all within them, and fall upon others, or quarrel with every thing that ſtandeth in their way.* Their contempt of God doth caſt them into ſome *affliction*, and they quarrel with the *Inſtruments*, and medle not with the mortall cauſe at home. Their

ſin

sin finds them out, and testifieth against them; and they are angry with the *rod*, and repine at *Providence*, as if *God himself* were more to be suspected of the Cause then they. Yea, it is become with many a serious doubt, Whether *God* doth not *Necessitate* them to *sin*; and, Whether they omit not duty meerly because he will not give them power to perform it; and, Whether their sin be any other then a Relation unavoidably resulting from a Foundation laid by the hand of God himself. Do men know themselves, that will sooner suspect and blame the most Righteous, Holy God, then their own unrighteous carnal hearts? Man drinketh up iniquity like water; but there is no unrighteousnes with God. Saith *Innocent*, [*Conceptus est homo in fœtore luxuriæ, quódq; deterius est, in labe peccati; natus ad laborem, timorem, dolorem*, &c. *Agit prava, quibus offendit Deum; offendit proximum; offendit seipsum; agit turpia, quibus polluit famam, polluit personam, polluit conscientiam: Agit vana, quibus negligit sana; negligit utilia; negligit necessaria.*] *Man is conceived in the filth or stink of luxury* (or lust,) *and which is worse, in the stain of sin: born to labour, fear, and pain*, &c. *He doth that which is evil, to the offence of God; his neighbour*

bour and himself: He doth that which is filthy, to the polluting of his fame, his person and his Conscience: He doth that which is vain, neglecting what is sound and profitable, and necessary.] And is not such a frail and sinfull wight, more likely to be the cause of sin then God? and to be culpable in all the ill that doth befall us?

And it shews that men little *know themselves*, when all their *complaints* are poured out more fluently on *others* then *themselves*. Like sick stomacks that find fault with every dish, when the fault is *within them*: Or like pained, weak, or froward children; that quarrel with every thing that toucheth them, when the cause is in *themselves*. If they want *Peace*, *Content* or *Rest*, they lay the blame on this place or that, this or that person, or estate: They think if they had their mind in this or that, they should be well: And therefore they are still contriving for somewhat, which they want; and studying changes or longing after this or that; which they imagine would work the Cure: When, alas poor souls, the *sin*, the *sickness*, the *want* is *in themselves*. It is a *wiser mind*, a *better*, more *holy*, *heavenly will*, thats wanting to them; without which nothing in the world will solidly con-

content and comfort them. *Seneca* can teach them this much by the light of Nature [*Non longa peregrinatione, nec locorum varietatibus, tristitiam mentis gravitatémq; discutes: animum debes mutare, non cœlum: licèt vastum trajeceris mare, sequuntur te, quoçunq; perveneris, vitia. Quid miraris tibi peregrinationes non prodesse, cum te circumferas? Premit te eadem causa quæ expulit. Quid terrarum juvare novitas potest? Quid cognitio urbium aut locorum? In irritum cedit ista jactantia. Onus animi deponendum est, non antè tibi ullus placebit locus. Vadis huc & illuc, ut excutias incidens pondus, quod ipsa jactatione incommodius fit: sicut in navi onera immota minùs urgent, inæqualiter convoluta citiùs eam partem, in quam incumbunt, demergunt. Quicquid facis, contra te facis: & mota ipso noces tibi: ægrum enim concutis. At cum istud exemeris malum, omnis mutatio loci jucundus fiet. In ultimas expellaris terras licèt, in quolibet Barbariæ angulo colloceris, hospitalis tibi illa qualiscunq; sedes erit. Magis Quis veneris, quam Quò, interest.*] that is, [*It is not by long travels, or by change of places, that you can discuss the sadness and heaviness of the mind. Its the Mind, and not the Climate that you should*

change: though you paſs the vaſteſt ſea, your vices will follow you whitherſoever you go. Why marvelleſt thou that travels avail thee not, when thou carrieſt about thy ſelf? The ſame cauſe that drove thee away, doth follow thee. What can the novelty of countreys avail? Or the knowledge of Cities and places? This toſſing up and down is vain; Its the load of thy mind, that muſt be laid down: Till that be done, no place will pleaſe thee: Thou goeſt up and down to ſhake off a burden thats faſtened on thee; which even by thy motion doth become more troubleſome. As in a ſhip the ſetled weight is leaſt troubleſome, when things unequally thrown together, do ſink the part in which they lye. What thou doſt, thou doſt it againſt thy ſelf; and hurteſt thy ſelf by the very motion; For thou ſhakeſt a ſick perſon: But when once thou haſt taken out of thy ſelf the evil, every change of place will be pleaſant. Though thou be expelled into the remoteſt lands; or placed in any corner of Barbary, *it will be however to thee a ſeat of hoſpitality; It more concerneth thee to know Who* (or What) *thou art thy ſelf that comeſt thither, then Whither it is that thou comeſt.*]

Did you *know your ſelves* in all your griefs, its *there* that you would ſuſpect and find your malady, and *there* that you would moſt ſolicitouſly ſeek the cure. BY

BY this time, if you are willing, you may see, where lyeth the disease and misery of the world and also what must be the cure. Man hath *lost himself*, by *seeking* himself: He hath lost *himself in* the losse of *God*. He departed from *God*, that he might enjoy *himself:* and so is estranged from *God* and *himself*. He left the *Sun*, and retired into *darkness*, that he might behold *himself*, and *not* the *Light*; and now beholdeth neither *himself* nor the *light:* For he can not behold *himself* but *by the Light*. As if the *Body* should forsake the *Soul* and say, I will no longer serve another, but will be my own: what would such a *selfish* separation procure but the converting of a Body into a loathsome Carkass, and a senseless clod? Thus hath the Soul dejected it selfe, by turning *to it self*, and seperating from *God:* without whom it hath neither Life, nor Light nor Joy. By desiring a selfish kind of Knowledge of Good and evill, withdrawing from its just dependance upon God, it hath involved it self in Care and misery, and lost the quieting delighting *Knowledge* which it had in God. And now poor man is lost in er-

ror: He is ſtragled ſo farre from home, that he knoweth not where he is, nor which way to returne, till Chriſt in mercy ſeeke and ſave him, *Math.* 18. 11. *Luk.* 19. 10.

Yet could we but get men to *know* that they do *not know themſelves*, there were the greater hope of their recovery. But this is contrary to the nature of their diſtemper. An eye that is blinded by a ſuffuſion or Cataract, ſeeth not the *thing* that *blindeth it:* It is the *ſame Light* that muſt ſhew them *themſelves*, and their *ignorance* of *themſelves:* Their *ſelf-ignorance* is part of the *ſelf-evill* which they have to know. Thoſe troubled ſouls that complain that they *know not themſelves*, doe ſhew that they *begin* at leaſt *to know themſelves.* But a Phariſee will ſay [*Are we blind alſo?*] *Joh.* 9. 40, They are *too blind* to *know that they are blind.* The Goſpell ſhall be rejected, the Apoſtles perſecuted, Chriſt himſelf abuſed and put to death, the Nation ruined, themſelves and their poſterity undone by the Blindneſs of theſe Hypocrites, before they will *perceive* that they *are Blind*, and that they know not God or themſelves. Alas the long calamityes of the Church, the diſtempers and confuſions in the ſtate, the

the lamentable diviſions and diſſenſions among believers, have told the world, how little moſt men know themſelves; and yet they themſelves will not perceive it. They tell it aloud to all about them, by their ſelf-conceitedneſs and cruelty, uncharitable cenſures, reproaches and impoſitions, that *they know not themſelves*, and yet you cannot make *them* know it. Their *afflicted brethren feel* it to their ſmart; the *ſuffering grieved Churches feel it*; thouſands *groan* under it, that never wronged them: and yet you cannot make them *feel it*.

Did they well know themſelves to be *Men*, ſo many would not uſe themſelves like beaſts; and care ſo little for their moſt noble part. Did they know themſelves aright to be *but Men*, ſo many would not ſet up themſelves as Gods: They would not arrogate a Divine authority in the matters of God, and the Conſciences of others, as the Roman Prelats do: Nor would they deſire ſo much that the obſervation, reverence, admiration, love and applauſe of all ſhould be turned upon them; nor be ſo *impatient* when they ſeem to be neglected; nor make ſo great a matter of their wrongs, as if it were ſome Deity that were injured.

O what a *change* it would make in the world, if men were brought to the *knowledge of themſelves?* How many would *weep*, that now *laugh*, and live in mirth and pleaſure? How many would lament their ſin and miſery, that now are Phariſaically confident of their integrity? How many would ſeek to faithfull Miniſters for advice, and enquire what they ſhould do to be *ſaved*, that now deride them, and ſcorn their counſell, and cannot bear their plain reproof or come not near them? How many would ask directions for the cure of their unbelief, and pride and ſenſuality, that now take little notice of any ſuch ſins within them? How many would cry day and night for mercy, and beg importunatly for the life of their immortall ſouls, that now take up with a few words of courſe inſtead of ſerious fervent prayer? Doe but once know *your ſelves* aright, know what you are, and what you have done, and what you want, and what's your danger; and then be prayerleſs and careleſs if you can: Then ſit ſtill and trifle out your time, and make a jeaſt of holy diligence, and put God off with lifeleſs words and complements if you can. Men could not thinke ſo lightly

and

and contemptuously of Christ, so unworthily and falsly of a holy life, so delightfully of sin, so carelesly of Duty, so fearlesly of Hell, so senslesly and atheistically of God, and so disregardfully of Heaven, as now they do, if they did but throughly know themselves.

AND now, Sirs, me thinks, your consciences should begin to stir, and your thoughts should be turned inwards upon your selves, and you should seriously consider, what measure of acquaintance you have at home, and what *you have done* to procure and maintain such acquaintance. Hath Conscience no *Use* to make of this *Doctrine*, and of all that hath been said upon it? Doth it not *reprove* you for your self neglect, and your wanderings of mind, and your aliene, unnecessary fruitless Cogitations? Had you been but as strange to your familiar *friend*, and as regardless of his acquaintance, correspondencie and affaires, as too many of you have been of your *Own*, you may imagine how he would have taken it, and what Use he would have made of it: some such Use it beseemeth you to make of estrangednes

edneſs to your ſelves. Would not he ask, [What is the matter that my friend ſo ſeldom looketh at me? and no more mindeth me or my affaires? What have I done to him? How have I deſerved this? What more beloved company or employment hath he got?] You have this and much more to plead againſt your great Neglect and Ignorance of your ſelves.

In order to your *conviction* and *reformation*, I ſhall firſt ſhew you ſome of thoſe Reaſons, that ſhould move you to *Know your ſelves*, and conſequently ſhould humble you for neglecting it: and then I ſhall ſhew you, what are the Hinderances that keep men from ſelf-acquaintance, and give you ſome Directions neceſſary to attaine it.

In generall conſider, it is by the Light of knowledge that all the affairs of your ſouls muſt be directed: And therefore *while you know not your ſelves, you are in the dark, and unfit to manage your own affairs.* your *Principall* error about *your ſelves* will have influence into all the tranſactions of your lives, you will neglect the greateſt duties, and abuſe and corrupt thoſe which you think you do performe.

While

While you know not yourselves, you know not *what you do*, nor *what you have to do*, and therefore can do nothing well. For instance.

1. When you should *Repent of sin*, you know it not as *in yourselves*, and therefore cannot *savingly Repent* of it. If you know in *generall*, that you are sinners, or know your *gross* and *crying sins*, which Conscience cannot overlook, yet the sins which you know not because you will not know them, may condemne you. How can you Repent of your Pride, Hypocrisie, Self-love, Self-seeking, your Want of love and feare, and trust in God, or any such sins which you never did observe? Or if you perceive some sins, yet if you perceive not that they reign and are predominant, and that you are in a state of sin, how can you Repent of that estate which you perceive not? Or if you have but a sleight and superficiall sight of your sinfull state and your particular sins, you can have but a superficiall false Repentance.

2. If you *know not yourselves*, you cannot be *duely sensible of your misery*. Could it be expected that the *Pharisees* should *lament*, that they *were of their Father the Devill*, as long as they boasted that they were

were the *Children of God? Joh.* 8. 41, 44. Will they lament that they are under the wrath of God, the curſe of the Law, and the bondage of the Devill, that know not of any ſuch miſery that they are in, but hope they are the heirs of heaven? What think you is the reaſon, that when Scripture telleth us that few ſhall be ſaved, and none at all but thoſe that are new creatures, and have the Spirit of Chriſt, that yet there is not one of many that is ſenſible that *the caſe is theirs?* Though Scripture peremptorily concludeth, that *They that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God*, and that *To be carnally minded is death*, Rom, 8. 6, 7, 8. and that *Without holyneſs none ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. and that all *They ſhall be damned that believe not the truth but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſ. 2. 12. and that *Chriſt will come in flaming fire, takeing vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Goſpell of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord and the glory of his power, when he ſhall come to be glorifyed in his ſaints and admired in all them that do believe.* 2 Theſ. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10. And would not a man think that ſuch words as theſe ſhould waken the

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guilty soul that doth *believe them?* and make us all to look about us? I confess it is no wonder, if a *flat Atheist* or *Infidel* should sleight them and deride them! But is it not a wonder if they stir not those, that *profess to believe* the word of God, and are the men of whom these Scriptures speak. And yet among a thousand that are thus *condemned already*; (I say, by the *word*, that is the *Rule of Judgement* even *condemned already*; For so God saith, *Joh.* 3. 18.) how few shall you see that with penitent tears lament their misery? How few shall you hear, with true remorse, complain of their spiritual distress, and cry out as those that were pricked at the heart, *Act.* 2. 37. Men and Brethren, what shall we do? In all this Congregation, how few hearts are affected with so miserable a case? Do you see by the *tears*, or hear by the *complaints* of those about you, that they know what it is, to be *unpardoned sinners, under the wrath of the most holy God!* And what is the matter that there is no more such lamentation? Is it because there are few or none so miserable? Alas! no. The Scripture, and their worldly, fleshly, and ungodly lives, assure us of the contrary. But it is because men are *strangers* to *themselves.*

They

They little think that its *themſelves*, that all the terrible threatnings of God do mean. *Moſt* of them little believe or conſider, *what Scripture* ſaith; But *fewer* conſider *what Conſcience* hath to ſay within, when once it is awakened, and the curtain is drawn back, and the light appeareth. The firſt Propoſition inferreth not the concluſion; And the Aſſumption they overlook. Did all that read and hear the Scriptures *know themſelves*, I'le tell you how they would hear and read it. When the Scripture ſaith, [*To be carnally minded is death: and if ye live after the fleſh ye ſhall dye,*] *Rom.* 8. 8, 13. the guilty hearer would ſay [*I am carnally minded: and I live after the fleſh: therefore I muſt Turn or Die.*] When the Scripture ſaith [*Where your treaſure is, there will your hearts be alſo*] *Mat.* 6.21. The guilty conſcience would aſſume [*My heart is not in Heaven, therefore my treaſure is not there.*] When Scripture ſaith [*Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* Matth. 18. 3. and *Except a man be regenerate and born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,* John 3. 3, 5. and [*If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſſed away, behold all*

all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17. and [*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9.] The guilty hearer would assume [*I was never thus converted, regenerate, born again, and made a new creature: I have not the Spirit of Christ: therefore I am none of his, and cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, till this change be wrought upon me.*] When the Scripture saith [*Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, Heb. 13. 4.] The guilty hearer would say, [*How then shall I be able to stand before him?*]

Yea, did but Hearers *know themselves*, they would perceive their danger from *remoter* principles, that mention the dealing of God with *others*. When they hear of the judgement of God upon the ungodly, & the enemies of the Church, they would say [*Except I Repent, I shall likewise perish*] Luke 13. 3, 5. When they hear that [*Judgement must begin at the house of God*] They would infer [*What then shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God?*] And when they hear that [*The Righteous are scarcely saved*] They would think [*Where then shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*] 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.

3. If you *know not your selves, you cannot be Christians*: you cannot have a pra-

ctical belief in Christ: For he is offered to you in the Gospel, as the *remedy for your Misery*; as the *ransome* for *your enthralled souls*; as the *propitiation for your sin*, and *your peace-maker* with the Father; without whose merit, satisfaction, righteousness, and intercession, your guilty souls can have no hope. And can you savingly value him in these respects, if you know not that sin and misery, that guilt and thraldom, in which your need of Christ consisteth? Christ is esteemed by you according to the judgement you pass upon *your selves*.

They that say *they are sinners*, from a general brain-knowledge, will accordingly say *Christ is their Saviour and their hope*, with a superficial Belief, and will honour him with their lips with all the titles belonging to the *Redeemer* of the world: But they that *feel* that they are deadly sick of sin at the very heart, and are lost for ever if he do not save them, will *feel* what the name of a Saviour signifieth, and will look to him as the Israelites to the brazen Serpent, and cast themselves at his feet, for the crums of grace, and will yield up themselves to be saved by him, in his way. An *ineffectual knowledge of your selves*, may make you believe in a *Redeemer*, as *all the City* do of a Learned

Learned able Physicion, that will speak well of his skill, and resolve to use him when necessity constraineth them, but at present they find no such necessity. But an *effectual sight* and *sense* of your condition, will bring you to Christ, as a man in a *Dropsie* or *Consumption* comes to the Physicion, that *feels* he must have help or die. Saith *Bernard*, [*Filium Dei non reputat Jesum, qui ipsius non terretur comminationibus*, &c.] You will not take the Son of God for a Saviour, if you be not affrighted by his threatnings] And if you perceive not that you are lost, you will not heartily thank him that came to seek and save you. [*Non consolantur Christi lachryma cachinnantes, non consolantur panni ejus ambulantes in stolis; non consolantur stabulum & præsepe amantes primas Cathedras in Synagogis.*] saith *Bernard* [*Christs tears do not comfort them that laugh: his rags do not comfort them that* (*love to*) *walk in robes: his stable and manger comfort not them that love the highest seats in the Synagogues.*] Can you seek to Christ to *take you up*, till you find that you have *fallen* and *hurt* you? Will you seek to him to fetch you from the gates of hell, that find not that you are *there*?

But to the self-condemning soul that know-

eth it self, how wellcome would a Saviour be? How ready is such a soul for Christ? Thou that *judgest thy self* art the person that must *come to Christ to Justifie thee.* Now thou art ready to be healed by him, when thou findest that thou art sick, and dead: Hast thou received the *sentence of death in thy self? Come* to him now and *thou shalt have life, John* 5. 40. 1 *John* 5. 11. Art thou *weary* and *heavy laden? Come* to him for *rest: Come* and *fear not*; for he *bids thee come, Matthew* 11. 27, 28. Dost thou know that *thou hast sinned against Heaven and before God, and art not worthy to be called a Son?* Do but cast thy self then at his feet, and tell him so, and ask forgiveness, and try whether he will not welcome and embrace thee, pardon and entertain thee, cloth thee and feast thee, and rejoyce over thee as one that *was lost, and is found, was dead, and is alive*, Luke 15. For *he came to seek and to save that which was lost*, Luke 19 10. While thou saidst, *I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knewest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked*; thou wouldst not *buy the tryed Gold that thou mightest be rich, nor his whitecyment that thou mightest be cloath-*

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ed, that the shame of thy nakedness might not appear; nor Christs eye salve that thou mightest see, Rev. 3. 17, 18. But now thou art *poor in Spirit*, and findest that thou *art nothing*, and *hast nothing*, and of thy self *canst do nothing* that is acceptably good. *John* 15. 5. and that of thy self thou art *insufficient to think any thing* that is good, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. now thou art readier for the help of Christ, and a patient fit for the tender healing hand of the Physicion. Whilst thou saidst, *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor as this Publican, thou wast further from Christ and Justification, then now thou standest as afar off and darest scare look up to heaven, but smitest on thy breast* and saist, *Lord be mercifull to me a sinner*, Luke 18. 11, 12, 13, 14. Not that extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or any that are ungodly, are *justified* or can be saved, while they are such: Nor that a smiting on the breast, with a [*Lord be mercifull to me a sinner*] will serve their turn while they continue in their wicked lives: But when thou art brought to accuse and condemn thy self, thou art prepared for his grace that must renew and justifie thee. None sped better with Christ, then the woman that confest *her self a dog*, and begged but for

the *childrens crums* : And the Centurion that ſent friends to Chriſt to mediate for him, and as being unworthy to come himſelf, and unworthy that Chriſt ſhould enter under his roof : For of the firſt Chriſt ſaid [*O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt*] Mat. 15. 27, 28. And of the ſecond he ſaith with admiration [*I have not found ſo great faith, no not in* Iſrael, *Luke* 7. 6, 7, 8, 9.] Though thou art ready to deny the title of a child, and to number thy ſelf with the dogs, yet go to him and beg his crums of mercy. Though thou think that Chriſt will not come to ſuch a one as thou, and though thou beg prayers of others, as thinking he will not hear thy own, thou little thinkeſt how this ſelf-abaſement and ſelf-denyal prepareth thee for his tendereſt mercies, and his eſteem. When thou art contrite (as the duſt that's trodden underfeet) and poor, and trembleſt at the Word, then will he look at thee with compaſſion and reſpect, *Iſa.* 66. 2. [*For thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place : with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones : For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwayes wroth,*

wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made, Isa. 57. 15. When thou art using the self-condemning words of *Paul*, Rom. 7. 14. to 25. [*I am carnal, sold under sin: what I would, that do I not; and what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing —— I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. —— A Law in my members warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of sin ——*] when thou criest out with him [*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me, from the body of this death*;] thou art then fitter to look to thy Redeemer, and use the following words [*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*] When thou didst *exalt thy self*, thou wast obnoxious to the stormes of Justice, which was engaged to bring thee low: But now thou *humblest thy self*, thou liest in the way of Mercy, that is engaged to *exalt thee*, Luke 14. 11. & 18. 14. Mercy looketh *downard*, and can quickly spie a sinner in the dust; but cannot *leave him* there, nor deny him compassion and relief. Art thou cast out as helpless, wounded by thy sin, and neglected by all others that pass by? Thou art the fittest object for the skill

and mercy of him that waſheth ſinners in his blood, and tenderly bindeth up their wounds, and undertakes the perfecting of the cure, though yet thou muſt bear the Surgeons hand, till his time of perfect cure be come, *Luke* 10. 33, 34, 35. Now thou perceiveſt the *greatneſs* of thy ſin and miſery, thou art fit to ſtudy the greatneſs of his mercy: & with *all Saints* (to ſtrive) *to comprehend, what is the breadth, & length, & depth, & height, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge*, Epheſ. 3. 18, 19. Now thou haſt *ſmitten upon the thigh*, and ſaid, *What have I done? Jerem.* 31. 19. & 8. 6. thou art fitter to look unto him that was *wounded* and *ſmitten* for thy tranſgreſſions, and to conſider what *he hath done*, and *ſuffered*: how he *hath born thy grief and carried thy ſorrows, and was bruiſed for thy iniquities; the chaſtiſment of our peace was laid upon him, and we are healed by his ſtripes: All we like ſheep have gone aſtray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Iſa. 53. 4, 5, 6, &c. Art thou in doubt whether there be any *forgiveneſs* for thy ſins? and whether there be any *place for Repentance?* Remember that Chriſt is *exalted by Gods right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour*

Saviour, to give Repentnace unto Israel and forgivneſs of *ſins* Act. 5. 31. And that he himſelf hath ſpoken it, that [*All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men,*] *except the Blaſphemy againſt the Spirit.* Math. 12. 32. And *this Forgiveneſs of ſins* thou art bound to believe as an Article of thy Creed: that it is *purchaſed by Chriſt*, and *freely offered in the Goſpell.* Mercy did but wait all this while, till thou waſt brought to underſtand the *want* and *worth* of it, that it might be *thine.* When a *Peter* that denyeth Chriſt with oaths and curſing, goeth out and weepeth, he ſpeedily finds mercy from him without, that he but now denyed within. When ſo bloody a *perſecuter* as *Paul* findeth mercy, upon his proſtration and confeſſion; and when ſo great an offender as *Manaſſeh* is forgiven upon his penitence, in bonds; when all his *witchcraft*, *Idolatry* and *crueltyes* are pardoned, upon a repentance that might ſeeme to have been forced by a grievous ſcourge; what ſinner that perceives his ſin and miſery, can queſtion his entertainment if he come to Chriſt. *Come to him* ſinner, with thy *load* and *burden*; Come to him with all thy acknowledged unworthyneſs: and try whether he will re-

refuſe thee. He hath profeſſed that [*Him that cometh to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out*] Joh. 6. 37. He refuſed not his very *murderers*, when they were *pricked at the heart* and enquired after a remedie, Act. 2. 37. And will he refuſe thee? Hath our Phyſicion poured out his blood to make a medicine for diſtracted ſinners? and now is he unwilling to work the cure? [*Fuſus eſt ſanguis medici, & factum eſt medicamentum frenetici*] ſaith *Auguſtine*. O ſiner! now thou art brought to *know thy ſelf*, *know Chriſt alſo*, and the *cure is done*. Let thy thoughts of the *Remedie* be *deeper* and *larger* and *longer* then all thy thoughts of thy *Miſery?* It is thy *ſin* and *ſhame* if it be not ſo: Why wilt thou have twenty thoughts of *ſin* and *miſery*, for one that thou haſt of *Chriſt* and *mercy*? when *mercy* is ſo *large* and *great* and *wonderfull* as to triumph over *miſery:* and *Grace aboundeth much more where ſin hath abounded*, Rom, 5. 20. [*Inſpice vulnera pendentis; ſanguinem morientis; pretium redimentis; cicatrices reſurgentis. Caput habet inclinatum ad oſculandum; cor apertum ad diligendum; brachia extenſa ad amplexandum, totum corpus expoſitum ad redimendum*] ſaith *Auguſtin.* [*Behold the wounds of Chriſt as he is hanging*

ing; the blood of him dying, the price of him redeeming, the scars of him rising. His Head is bowed to Kiss thee: his heart open to love thee; his arms open to embrace thee; his whole body exposed to redeem thee.]

[*Homo factus est hominis Factor, ut fingeret ubera regens sydera; ut esuriret Panis; ut sitiret Fons; dormiret Lux; ab itinere via fatigaretur; falsis testibus Veritas occultaretur; Index vivorum & mortuorum à judice mortali judicaretur; ab injustis justitia damnaretur; flagellis disciplina cæderetur; spinis botrus coronaretur; in ligno fundamentum suspenderetur; virtus infirmaretur; salus vulneraretur; vita moreretur*] saith *Aug.* that is, [*The Maker of man was made man; that he might suck the breasts that rules the starrs; that Bread might hunger, the Spring (or fountain) might thirst; the Light might sleep, the Way might be weary in his journey; that the Truth might be hidden by false witnesses: That the Judge of quick and dead might be judged by a mortal judge: Justice might be condemned by the unjust; Discipline might be scourged; the Cluster of grapes might be crowned with thorns; the Foundation might be hanged on a tree; that Strength might be weakned; that Health might be*

wounded:

wounded ; and that Life it ſelf might dye.] This is the wonderfull myſtery of Love, which will entertain the ſoul that comes to Chriſt, and which thou muſt *ſtudy* to *know* when thou *knoweſt thy ſelf*. But *till then* all theſe will be *riddles*, to thee, or *little reliſhed :* and Chriſt will ſeem to thy neglecting heart to have dyed and done all this in vain.

And hence it is, that as proud, ungodly ſenſuall men, were never *ſound Believers*, ſo they oft-times fall from that *opinionative common faith* which they had, and of all men do moſt eaſily turn Apoſtates: It being juſt with God that they ſhould be ſo far forſaken as to vilifye the remedie, that *would* not know their ſin & miſery, but love it and pertinaciouſly hold it as their felicity.

4. If you *Know not your ſelves, you will not know what to do with your ſelves, nor to what end and for what work you are to live.* This makes the Holy work neglected, and moſt men live to little purpoſe, waſting their daies in matters that *them ſelves* will call *impertinent* when they come to die : as if they were good for nothing elſe. Whereas if they *knew them ſelves*, they would know that they are made and fitted for more noble workes. O man, if thou were

were acquainted well with thy *faculties* and *frame*, thou wouldeſt perceive the *Name of God thy Maker*, to be ſo deeply engraven in thy nature, even in all thy parts and powers, as ſhould Convince thee that thou waſt made for *him*; that all thou *art* and all thou *haſt*, is *nothing worth*, but for *his ſervice*: As all the parts and motions of a *clock* or *watch*, are but to *tell the hour of the day*. Thou wouldſt *know then* the meaning of *Sanctification* and *Holineſs*: that it ſignifyeth but the *Giving God his own*; and is the *firſt part* of *Juſtice*; without which, no rendering *men their due* can prove thee *Juſt*: Thou wouldſt then know the *unreaſonableneſs* and *injuſtice* of *ungodlyneſs* and *all ſin*: And that to ſerve thy fleſhly luſts and pleaſures with thoſe noble faculties that were purpoſely formed to love and ſerve the Eternall God, is more *abſurd* and *villainous*, then to employ the higheſt officers of the King, in the ſweeping of your chimneyes, or the ſerving of your ſwine. Remember it, unreaſonable, brutiſh man, the next time thou art going to thy luſts and ſenſuall delights. It is no wiſer a courſe thou takeſt: It is no more honorable or juſt: but as much worſe, as *God*

is

is to be preferred to a *King*; and as thy *ſin is* worſe then the ſerving of thy ſwine. O man, didſt thou but know thy ſelf and for what employment thy facultyes are made, thou wouldſt lift up thy head, and ſeriouſly think, *who* holds the reins? *who* keepes thy breath yet in thy noſtrills, and continueth thee in life? And *where* it is that thou muſt ſhortly fix thy unchangeable abode; And what is *now* to be done in *preparation* for ſuch a day? *Os homini ſublime dedit*, &c. Thou wouldſt know that thou hadſt not that *Reaſon*, and that *will and executive power*, to rowl in the earth, and be but a *cunning kind of beaſt*, that hath *wit* to *play the fool*, and can *ingeniouſly* live *below underſtanding*; and do that *with argument* which other bruits can do *without it*: Thou wouldſt know that thy *higher faculties* were not made to ſerve the *lower*: thy *Reaſon* to ſerve thy *ſenſuall delight*: the *horſe* was not made to *ride the man*, nor the *maſter* to follow and attend the *dog*. O man! hadſt thou not loſt the *Knowledge of thy ſelf*, thou wouldſt be ſo far from *wondering* at a *Holy life*, that thou wouldſt look upon an *unholy perſon* as a *monſter*, and wouldſt hear the deriders and oppoſers of a holy life, as thou wouldſt

hear

hear him that were deriding a *man* becauſe he is not a *ſwine*, or were reproaching men *of honor* and *learning*, becauſe they live not as an *Aſs*.

I confeſs, *my ſoul* is too apt to *loſe* its lively ſenſe of all theſe things: But when ever it is awake, I am forc't to ſay, in theſe kind of meditations, [If *I had not a God to know and think on, to Love and honor, to ſeek and ſerve, what had I to do with my underſtanding, will and all my powers? What ſhould I do with life and time? What uſe ſhould I make of Gods proviſions? What could I find to do in the World, that is worthy of a man? Were it not as good lie ſtill, and ſleep out my daies and profeſſedly do nothing, as to go dreaming with a ſeeming ſeriouſneſs, and wander about the world as in my ſleep, and do nothing with ſuch a troubleſome ſtir, as ſenſuall worldly perſons do? Could not I have plaid the beaſt without a Reaſonable free-working ſoul?* Let them turn from God, and neglect the conduct of the Redeemer, and diſregard the holy approaches and breathings and workings of the ſoul towards its beloved Center and felicity, that know not what an immortal ſoul is, or know how els to imploy their facultyes, with ſatisfaction or

content

conttent unto themſelves. I profeſs here as in his preſence that is the Father of ſpirits, and before Angels and men, I do not, I know not what els to do with my ſoul that's worth the doing, but what is ſubſervient to its proper object, its end and everlaſting Reſt. If the Holy ſervice of God and the preparation for Heaven, and making after Chriſt and happineſs, be forbidden me, I have no more to do in the world, that will ſatisfie my *Reaſon*, or ſatisfie my *affections*, or that as a *man* or a *Chriſtian* I can *own*. And its as good *not live*, as to be deprived of the *uſes* and the *ends* of *Life*. Though my *Love* and *Deſires* are infinitely below the *Eternall Goodneſs*, and *Glory*, which they ſhould proſecute and embrace, yet do my *little taſts*, and *dull deſires*, and *cold affections* conſent unfeignedly to ſay, *Let me have God or nothing: Let me know him and his will, and what will pleaſe him, and how I may enjoy him: or O that I had never had an underſtanding to know any thing! Let me remember him; or O that I had never had a memory! Let me Love him and be beloved of him; or O that I had never had ſuch a thing as Love within me! Let me hear his teachings, or have no ears: Let me ſerve him with*

with my riches, or let me have none: and with any interest and honour, or let me be despised] Its *Nothing* that he gives not *Being* to: And its *Useless* that is not *for his Glory and his will.* If *God* have nothing to do with me, I have nothing to do with *myself*, nor the *world* hath nothing to do with me.

Let dark and dreaming, doating sinners declare their shame, and speak evill of what they never knew, and neglect the Good they never saw; let them that know not *themselves or God*, refuse to give up *themselves to God*, and think a life of sensuality more suitable to them. But *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance on me.* Psal. 4. and let me no longer be a *man*, nor have Reason or any of thy talents in my trust, then I shall be *Thine*, and live to *Thee.* I say as Bernard [*Dignus plane est morte, qui tibi Christe recusat vivere; & qui tibi non sapit, desipit; & qui curat esse nisi propter te, pro nihilo est & nihil est. Propter teipsum Deus fecisti omnia; & qui esse vult sibi, & non tibi, nil esse incipit inter omnia.*] [*Worthy is that man, O Christ, to die, that refuseth to live to thee: and he that is not wise to thee, is but a foole; and he that careth to* Be *unless*

less it be for thee, *is good for nothing, and is nothing. For thy self O God hast thou made all things; and he that would Be to himself and not thee, among all things begineth to be Nothing.*]

5. If you *know not your selves, you know not how to apply the Word of God, which you read or heare*; you know not how to *use* either *promises* or *threatnings*, to the benefit of your soules: Nay you will *misapply* them to you *hurt*. If you are unregenerate and know it not, you will put by all the calls of God, that invite you to come in and be converted, and think that they belong to grosser sinners, but not to you. All the descriptions of the *unsanctified* and their *misery*, will little affect you; and all Gods *threatnings* to such will little move you; for you will think they are not meant of *you*; you will be Pharisaically *blessing your selves* when you should be *pricked at the heart* and laid in *Contrition* at the feet of Christ: you will be thanking God that you are not *such* as indeed *you are*; you will be making application of the *threatnings* to *others*, and pittying *them* when you should lament *your selves*; you will be *thundering* when you should be *trembling*; and speaking that evill of *others* that

that is your *owne*; and *convincing others* of that which *you* had need to be *convinced of*; and *wakening others* by talking in *your sleepe*; and calling other men hypocrites, proud, self conceited, ignorant and other such names that are indeed *your owne*; you will *read* or *heare* your *owne condemnation*, and *not* be *moved at* it, as not knowing your *owne* description when you heare it, but thinking that this thunderbolt is levelled at another sort of men. All the words of Peace and Comfort, you will think are meant of such as you. When you read of Pardon, Reconciliation, Adoption, and right to everlasting Life, you will imagine that all these are yours. And thus you will be *dreaming-rich and safe*, when you are *poore and miserable*, and in the greatest *perill*. And is it not pitty that the celestiall undeceving *Light* should be abused to so dangerous *selfdeceit?* and that *Truth* itself should be made the furtherance of so great an *error?* And that the *eyesalve* should more *put out your eyes!* Is it not sad to consider that you should now be *emboldened to presumption*, by that very word which (unless you be converted) will judge you to damnation? And that *self-deceit* should be *increased*, by the

glaſs of *verity* that ſhould *undeceive* you?

How can you know what *promiſe* or *threatning* doth belong to you, while you know notwhat ſtate your ſouls are in: Can you tell what *Phyſick* to take, till your *diſeaſe* be known? or chooſe your plaiſter till you know your ſore?]

6. If *you know not yourſelves, you know not how to confeſs or pray.* This makes men *Confeſs* their *ſins* ſo ſeldome and with ſo little remorſe to God and man; *you hide* them becauſe they are *hidden from yourſelves*; and therefore *God* will *open* them to your ſhame: whereas if they were *opened to you*, they would be *opened by you*, and covered by God. Saith Auguſtine [*Non operui, ſed aperui ut operirer; Non celavi, ut tegeres: Nam quando homo detegit, Deus tegit. Cum homo celat, Deus nudat: Cum homo agnoſcit, Deus ignoſcit*] [*I did not cover, but open that thou maiſt cover: I concealed not, that thou mightſt hide. For when man diſcloſeth, God covereth: When man hideth, God maketh bare: when man confeſſeth, God forgiveth.*] For want of *ſelf-acquintance* it is that men hypocritically confeſs to God in a way of cuſtome, the ſins which they will deny or excuſe to man; and will tell God formally

of

of much, which they cannot endure to be told of seriously by a reprover: or if they confess it generally with a seeming humility to others, they cannot beare that another should faithfully charge it upon them, in order to their true humiliation and amendment [*Indicia veræ confessionis sunt, si ut unusquisque se peccatorem dicit, id de se dicenti alteri non contradicat. Nam non peccator sed justus videri appetit, cum peccatorem se quisque nullo arguente confitetur; superbiæ quippe vitium est, ut quod de se fateri quis sua sponte dignatur, hoc sibi dici ab aliis dedignetur*] saith *Bernard.* [*It is the signe of true Confession if, as every one saith he is a sinner, he contradict not another that saith it of him. For he desireth not to seeme a sinner, but Righteous, when one confesseth himself a sinner when none reproveth him. It is the vice of Pride for a man to disdaine to have that spoken to him of others, which he stuck not to confess of his own accord concerning himself.*]

And for *prayer*, it is mens *ignorance of themselves* that makes prayer so little in request: Hunger best teacheth men to beg. You would be ofter *on your knees*, if you were *ofter in your hearts*. *Prayer* would not seem *needless*, if you *knew* your *needs*. *Know*

your selves and be prayerless if you can. When the Prodigal was convinced, he presently purposeth to *Confess* and *Pray*. When *Paul* was converted, *Ananias* hath this evidence of it from God [*Behold he prayeth*] Act. 9.11. Indeed the *inward* part of *prayer*, is the *motion of a returning soul to God*: saith *Hugo* [*Oratio est piæ mentis & humilis ad Deum conversio, fide, spe, & charitate subnixa.*] *Prayer is the turning of a pious humble soul to God, leaning upon faith, hope and love.*] It is [*Oranti subsidium, Deo sacrificium, dæmonibus flagellum*] *The relief of the Petitioner, the sacrifice of God, the scourge of Devils.*]

And *self-knowledge* would teach men *how* to pray. Your *own hearts* would be the best *Prayer-books* to you, if you were skilfull in reading them. Did you see what *sin is*, and in what *Relation* you stand to God, to *Heaven* and *Hell*, it would drive you above your *beads* and *lifeless words of course*, and make you know that to pray to God for pardon and salvation, is not a work for a *sleepy soul*: saith *Gregory*, [*Ille Deo veram Orationem exhibet qui semetipsum cognoscit, quia pulvis sit; humiliter videt, qui nihil sibi virtutis tribuit, &c.*] *He offereth the truest prayer to God, that knoweth*

knoweth himself, that humbly seeth he is but dust, and ascribeth not vertue to himself, &c.] Nothing quencheth prayer more, then to be *mistaken* or *mindless* about *our selves*. When we go *from home*, this fire goes out; But when we *return*, and search our hearts, and see the sins, the wants, the weaknesses that are there, and perceive the danger that is before us, and withall the glorious hopes that are offered us, here's fuell and bellows to enflame the soul, and cure it of its *drowsiness* and *dumbness*. Help any sinner to a *clearer light* to see into his *heart* and life, and to a *livelyer sense* of his *own condition*, and I warrant you he will be more disposed to *fervent prayer*, and will better understand the meaning of those words, *Luke* 18. 1. [*That men ought alwayes to pray and not to faint.*] and 1 *Thes.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*] You may hear some *impious persons now* disputing against *frequent* and *fervent prayer*, and saying, *What need all this ado?* But if you were able to open these mens eyes, and shew them what is *within them* and *before them*, you would quickly answer all their arguments, and convince them better then words can do, and put an end to the dispute. You would set all the prayerless families in Town and

Country, Gentlemens and poor mens, on ſervent calling upon God, if you could but help them to ſuch a ſight of their ſin and danger, as ſhortly the ſtouteſt of them muſt have. Why do they pray, and call for prayers, when they come to die, but that they begin a little better to know themſelves? They ſee then that youth and health and honour are not the things, nor make them not ſo happy, as befooling proſperity once perſwaded them. Did they believe and conſider what God ſaith of them, and not what flattery and ſelf-love ſay, it would open the mouths of them that are moſt ſpeechleſs. But thoſe that are *born deaf*, are alwayes *dumb*. How can they *ſpeak* that language with *deſire to God*, which they never *learn't* by *faith from God* or by *knowledge of themſelves*?

And ſelf-knowledge would teach men *what to ask*. They would feel *moſt need* of *ſpiritual* mercies, and beg hardeſt for them; and for *outward* things, they would ask but for their *daily bread*; and not be fooliſhly importunate with God for that which they know not to be ſuitable or good for them. [*Fideliter ſupplicans Deo pro neceſſitatibus hujus vitæ, & miſerecorditer auditur, & miſerecorditer non auditur.*

Quid

Quid enim infirmo sit utilius magis novit medicus quam ægrotus] saith *Prosper*. Its mercy to be *denyed* sometimes when we pray for *outward* things: Our Physition, and not we must choose our Physick, and prescribe our diet.

And if men *knew themselves*, it would teach them *on what terms* to *expect* the *hearing* of their *prayers*. Neither to be *accepted for their merits*, nor yet to be *accepted without that faith*, and *Repentance*, and *desire*, that seriousness, humility, and sincerity of heart, which the very nature of Prayer to God doth contain or presuppose. *He that nameth the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. and must *wash himself and make him clean, and put away the evil of his doings from before the eyes of God, and cease to do evil, and learn to do well*; Isa. 1. 16, 17. As knowing that though a *Simon Magus* must *Repent and Pray*, *Acts* 8. 22. and the *wicked in forsaking his way, and thoughts, and returning to the Lord*, must *seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near*] *Isa.* 55. 6, 7. and the prayers of a *humbled Publican* are heard, when he sets his *prayer against his sins*; Yet if he would *cherish his sin* by *prayer*, and *flatter himself* into a

presumption

presumption and *security* in a wicked life, because he useth to *ask God forgiveness*; if he thus *regard iniquity in his heart, God will not hear his prayers*, Psal. 66. 18. and *we know that* such impenitent *sinners God heareth not*, John 9. 31. And *thus* the *prayers of the wicked* as wicked, (which are not a withdrawing from his wickedness, but a bolster of his security, and as a craving of protection and leave to sin) are but *an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 17. 8. & 28 9. *Ferrum prius extrahendum, The bullet, the thorn* must be *first got out*, before any medicine can heal their wounds. Saith *Augustine* [*Plus Deo placet latratus canum, mugitus boum, grunnitus porcorum, quam cantus clericorum luxuriantium*] [*The barking of dogs, the lowing of beasts, the grunting of swine, doth please God better then the singing of luxuriant Clergymen.*] Did men *know themselves*, and who they have to do with in their prayers, they would not go from Cards, and Dice, and gluttony, and fornication, and railing, lying or reviling at the servants of the Lord, to a few hypocritical words of prayer, to salve all till the next time, and wipe their mouths, as if one sin had procured the forgiveness of another. Nor would they shut up a day of

of worldlineſs, ambition, ſenſuality or profaneneſs, with a few heartleſs words of confeſſion and ſupplication; or with the *words* of *penitence* while their *hearts* are *impenitent*, as if when they have *abuſed God* by *ſin*, they would make him amends or reconcile him by their *mockery*. Nor would they think to be accepted by *Praying for that* which they would not have; *for holineſs* when they hate *it*, and *for deliverance from the ſins* which they would not be delivered from; and would not have their prayers granted.

7. If you *know not your ſelves*, it *will unfit you for Thanksgiving*: Your *greateſt Mercies will be leaſt eſteemed*: And the *leſſer* will be *miſeſteemed*: And while you are *unthankfull* for *what you have*, you will be *abſurdly thanking God* for that which indeed *you have not*.

What ineſtimable Mercies are daily trodden under feet by ſinners, that know not their *worth*, becauſe they *know not* their *own neceſſities*! They have *Time to Repent*, and make preparation for an endleſs life: But they *know not* the *worth of it*, but unthankfully neglect it, and caſt it away on the baſeſt vanities: As if worldly cares, or wicked company, or fleſhly luſts, or Cards or Dice

or

or revellings, or idleneſs, were exerciſes in which they might better improve it, then the works of Holineſs, Juſtice and Mercy, which God hath made the buſineſs of their lives. Or as if the profits, and pleaſures and vain glory of this world, did better deſerve it, then their Creator, and their own ſouls, and the Heavenly inheritance. But if their eyes were opened to ſee where they ſtand, and what they are, and what are their dangers and neceſſities, how thankfull would they be for one year, one moneth, one day, one hour to Repent and cry to God for Mercy! and how ſenſibly would they perceive that a *hundred years time* is not *too long*, to ſpend in ſerious preparation for eternity?

They have now the *faithfull Miniſters of Chriſt*, inviting them in his name to come to him and receive the riches of his grace, and *beſeeching them in his ſtead to be reconciled unto God*, (*Mat.* 22. 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20.) But they ſtop their ears, and harden their hearts, and ſtiffen their necks, and love not to be diſturbed in their ſins, but are angry with thoſe that are ſollicitous for their ſalvation, and revile them as too preciſe and ſtrict, that tell them of the *One thing needfull*, and perſwade them to

chooſe

chooſe the better part, and tell them where their ſin will leave them. They take *them* for their *friends* that will *encourage* them in the way that *God condemneth*, and be *merry* with them in the way to endleſs *ſorrow*, and flatter them into ſecurity and impenitency till the time of grace be paſt; but they hate them as their enemies that faithfully reprove them, and tell them of their folly, and call them to a ſafer better way. Alas, Sirs, there would not be ſo many *Nations*, *Congregations*, and *Souls now* left in darkneſs and miſery by their *own doing*, having driven away the Mercy of the Goſpel, and thruſt their faithfull Teachers from them, if they *knew themſelves*. Men would not triumph in their own calamity, when they have expelled their faithfull Teachers, (the *duſt of* whoſe *feet*, the *ſweat* of their brows, the *tears* of their eyes, and the fervent *prayers* and *groans* of their *hearts* muſt witneſs againſt them,) if they *knew themſelves*. They would not be like a *mad man* that glorieth that he hath beaten away his Phyſition and his friends, and is left to himſelf, if they *knew themſelves*. When they have the earneſt Calls of the *Word without*, and convictions and urgings of the Spirit of God,

and

and their Consciences within, they would not wilfully go on, and cast these mercies at their heels, if they *knew themselves.*

They have leave to joyn in the *Communion of Saints*, and to enjoy the benefit of holy *Society* in prayer, and conference, and mutual love and spiritual assistance, and in the publick worship of God: but they pass these by, as having more of *trouble* and *burden*, then of *mercy*, because they little *know themselves.*

And their *inferior Mercies* of *Health*, and *Wealth*, and *food*, and *rayment*, and *friends*, and *accommodations*, they *misesteem* and *misuse*: and value them but as *provision for the flesh*, and the satisfaction of their sensual and inordinate desires, and not as their *necessary provision for their duty* in the way to *Heaven*! And therefore they are most thankfull for their greatest snares: For that honour and abundance which are stronger temptations, then they can overcome: For those fleshly contentments and delights, which are the enemies of grace, and the prison of their noblest faculties, and the undoing of their souls. If they *could* for *shame speak out*, they would thank God more for a whore, or a successfull gain, or the favour of their earthen gods,

gods, or for preferment, or commodity, lands or houſes, then ever they did for all the offers of Chriſt and grace, and all the invitations to a holy life. For there is much more joy and pleaſure in their *hearts* for the *former* then the *latter*.

And *Self-ignorance* will alſo *corrupt* your *Thanksgiving*, and turn it into *ſin* and *folly*. Is it not ſhame and pitty to hear an unpardoned enemy of Holineſs, and of God, to thank God that he is *Juſtified* and *Reconciled* to *God*, and *Adopted* to be his child, and made a member of Jeſus Chriſt? And to hear a carnal unregenerate perſon give thanks for his *Regeneration* and *Sanctification* by the *Holy Ghoſt*? As it is to hear a leper give thanks for perfect health, or a fool or mad man thank God for making him wiſer then his neighbours. Is it not pitty to hear a miſerable ſoul thank God for the Grace which he never had! and one that is near eternal miſery to thank God for making him an heir of Glory! O how many have thankt God Phariſaically for the *pardon of their ſins*, that muſt for ever *ſuffer for thoſe ſins!* How many have thanked him for giving them the *aſſured hopes of Glory*, that muſt be thruſt out into *endleſs miſery!* As I having known many,

many, that by their friends and by themſelves have been flattered into confident hopes of *life*, when they were ready to *die*, have thankt God that they were *pretty well*, and the *worſt was paſt*; which in the eyes of judicious ſtanders by, was not the leaſt aggravation of their ſad and deplorable ſtate. Methinks it is one of the ſaddeſt ſpectacles in the world to hear a man thanking God for the *aſſurance of ſalvation*, that is in a *ſtate of condemnation*, and like to be in Hell for ever! Theſe abſurdities could not corrupt your higheſt duties, and turn them into ſin, if you *knew your ſelves*.

A man that *knoweth* his own *neceſſities* and *unworthineſs*, is *thankfull for a little* to God and man. *Mercy* is as *no mercy*, where there is no ſenſe of *need* or *miſery*. [*Sapienti notum eſt quanti res quæq; taxanda ſit*] ſaith *Seneca*. Therefore God uſeth to *humble them* ſo *low* in the work of *converſion*, whom he meaneth ever after to imploy in the magnifying of his grace. And then that which is *folly* and *hypocriſie* from a *Phariſee*, will be an *acceptable ſacrifice* from a *humbled gratefull ſoul*, and he that by Grace is differenced from other men, may (modeſtly) thank God that he is not *as other men*.

men. For had he nothing more to thank God for, then the *ungodly world*, he would be rejected and perish with the *world*: And if he *have more* then the world, and yet be *no more thankfull* then the *world*, he would be guilty of greater *unthankfulness then the world.* [*Non est superbia elati, sed confessio non ingrati: & habere te cognosce, & nihil ex te habere; ut nec superbus sis, nec ingratus: Dic Deo tuo, quoniam sanctus sum quia sanctificasti me: quia accepi, non quæ habui; quia tu dedisti, non quæ ego merui*] saith *Augustine*, [*This is not the Pride of one lift up, but the acknowledgement of one thats not unthankfull: Know that thou hast, and know that thou hast nothing of thy self; that thou maist neither be proud, nor yet unthankfull. Say to thy God, I am holy, for thou hast sanctified me: for I have received what I had not; and thou hast given me what I deserved not.*] The *Thanksgiving* of a faithfull soul, is so far from being displeasing to God as a Pharisaical ostentation, that it is a great and excellent duty, and a most sweet and acceptable sacrifice, *Psal.* 50. 14. 23. *Offer unto God thanksgiving —— He that offereth praise, Glorifieth me.*]

8. And as to the *Lords Supper*, what work they are there like to make that are *un-*

acquainted with themselvelves, you may conjecture from the nature of the work, and the command of *self-examination* and *self-judging*. Though some may be wellcomed by Christ, that *have faith* and *love*, though they doubt of their *sincerity*, and *know not themselves* to be *children of God*; yet none can be welcome that *know not themselves* to be *sinners condemned* by the Law, and needing a Saviour to Reconcile and Justifie them. Who will be there humbled at the feet of Grace, and thankfull for a Redeemer, and hunger and thirst for Sacramental benefits, that knoweth not his own unworthiness and necessities? O what inestimable mercy would appear in a Sacrament to us, in the offers of Christ and saving grace, and communion with God and with his Saints, if our appetites were but quickned by the knowledge of our selves?

9. And I beseech you consider, whether *all your studies, and learning and employments, be not irrational, prepostorous and impertinent, while you study not first to know your selves?* You are *neareſt* to *your selves*, and therefore should be best acquainted with *your selves*. What should you more observe then the case of your own souls! and what should you know better then

whats

whats *within you*, and what you carry ſtill about you, and that which me thinks, you ſhould alwayes feel? even the bent of your own eſtimations and affections; the ſickneſſes of your ſouls; your guilt, your wants and greateſt neceſſities. All your *Learning* is but the concomitant of your *dotage* till you *know your ſelves*. Your wiſeſt ſtudies are but the workings of a diſtracted mind, while *you ſtudy* not *your ſelves*, and the things of everlaſting conſequence. The wiſe man was but derided by the ſtanders by, that fell over head into a ditch, whilſt he was buſily taking the height of a Star. To ſtudy whether it be the Sun or *Earth* that *moveth*, and not conſider what motion is predominant in *thy ſoul* and *life*, is a pittifull prepoſterous ſtudy: To think more what *ſtars* are in the *firmament*, then what *Grace* is in thy *heart*; and what *planet* reigneth, then what *diſpoſition* reigneth in thy *ſelf*; and whether the *Spirit* or fleſh have the dominion, is but to be *learnedly beſides thy ſelf*.

——————— *Illum ego juré*
Deſpiciam, qui ſcit quanto ſublimior Atlas

Omnibus in Lybia sit montibus; hic tamen idem
Ignoret quantum ferrata distet ab arca.

Is it not a *laborious madness* to *travail* into far Countreys, and compass Sea and land, to satisfie a curiosity; and to be at so much cost and pains to know the scituation, government, and manners, of the Cities and Countreys of the world, and in the meantime to be utterly *strange at home*, and never bestow one day or hour in a serious *survey* of *heart and life!* To carry about a dark, unknown, neglected soul, while they are travelling to know remotest things that less concern them? Me thinks it is a pittifull thing, to hear men ingeniously discoursing of the quality, laws and customs of other Nations, and of the affairs of Princes, and Common-wealths, and of the riches and commodities of Sea and land, and to be *mute* when they should express their *acquaintance with themselves*, either in *confession* and *prayer* to *God*, or in any *humble, experimental conference* with *men*. To trade abroad, and utterly neglect the trade of godliness at home. To keep correspondency with persons of all degrees, and to have no correspondence with *themselves*.

ſelves. To keep their *ſhop-books* and *accounts* with diligence, and never regard the *Book of Conſcience*, nor keep *account* of that for which they muſt ere long be *accountable to God.* Its a pittifull thing to ſee men turn over voluminous *hiſtories*, to know what hath been done from the beginning of the world, and regard no more the *hiſtory* of *their own lives*, nor once look back with penitent remorſe upon their ungodly careleſs Converſations, nor ſay, *What have we done?* To ſee men have well-furniſh't Libraries, and read over a multitude of Books, and never read the ſtate and records of their ſouls!

Quid juvat immenſos ſcire atq; evolvere caſus,
Si facienda fugis, ſi fugienda facis?

It maketh you but objects of wonder and compaſſion, to read *Laws* and *Records*, and underſtand all *Caſes*, and never endeavor to underſtand the *Caſe* of your *immortal ſouls!* To *counſell others* for their *temporal eſtates*, and never underſtand your own *ſpiritual ſtate!* To ſtudy the myſteries of *Nature*, and ſearch into all the works of God, except *your ſelves*,

and that which your happineſs or miſery doth depend on! To ſtudy the nature, and cauſes and ſigns of *bodily diſeaſes*, and their ſeveral *remedies*, and never ſtudy the *diſeaſes* of your *own ſouls*, nor the precious *remedy* which Mercy hath provided you. To cure the ſickneſſes of other mens bodies; and never feel a ſtony, proud or ſenſual heart, nor uſe any care and induſtry for the cure! To know the matters of all *Arts* and *ſciences*, to be able to diſcourſe of them all to the admiration of the hearers, is but an aggravation of thy lamentable folly, if thou be all this while a *ſtranger* to *thy ſelf*, and that becauſe thou art *mindleſs of thy ſouls* condition. You would but laugh at ſuch a Learned fool that knew not how to dreſs himſelf, or eat or drink or go, and yet could talk of the profoundeſt ſpeculations in Metaphyſicks or other ſciences. It is more neceſſary to *know your ſelves*, your ſin, your duty, your hopes, your dangers, then to know how to eat, or drink, or cloath your ſelves. Alas, it is a pittifull *kind* of *knowledge*, that will not keep you out of *Hell*; and a *fooliſh wiſdom* that teacheth you not to *ſave your ſouls*. *Per veram ſcientiam itur ad diſciplinam; per diſciplinam ad bonitatem; per*

bonitatem

bonitatem ad beatitudinem, saith *Hugo.* Till you know your selves, the rest of your knowledge is but a confused dream: When you know the *thing*, you know not the *end*, and *use* and *worth of it*. Self-knowledge will direct you in all your studies, and still imploy you on that which is necessary, and will do you good, when others are studying but unprofitable impertinent things; and indeed are but [*proud, knowing nothing* (when they seem to excell in knowledge) *but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, that take gain for godliness,*] 1 Tim. 6.4,5. *Self-knowledge* will help you in *all your studies*, to know, *Quo ordine, quo studio, quo fine unumquodq; scire oporteat. Quo ordine; ut illud prius, quod maturius movet ad salutem: Quo studio; ut illud ardentius, quod vehementius ad amorem: Quo fine; ut non ad inanem gloriam & ostentationem, sed ad tuam & aliorum salutem*] saith *Bernard. You will know in what order, with what study, and to what end every thing should be known: In what order, that that may go first, that most promoteth our salvation: with what study or desire; that we*

may know that most ardently, which most vehemently provoketh Love: To what end; that it be not for vainglory and ostentation, but for your own and other mens salvation.]

And as it is our selves and our own affairs that are *neerest* to us, and therefore first in order to be known; so it is *our selves* that we have *a special charge* of, and that we are *most obliged* to study and to know, and it is *our own condition* and *soul-affairs* that most *concern* us. Though *Sun* and *Moon*, and *earth*, be not little things in *themselves*; yet the *knowledge* of them is a *small* inconsiderable matter to *thee* in comparison of the knowledge of *thy self*. The words even of *Seneca* are so pungent on this subject, that I shall recite some of them to shame those professed Christians that are so much short of a heathen. [*Quid ad virtutem viam sternit syllabarum enarratio, verborum diligentia, & fabularum memoria, & versuum lex & modificatio? Quid ex his metum demit, cupiditatem frænat?*] *What furtherance to vertue is the enarration of syllables, the diligence of words, the remembring of fables, and the law and modification of Verses? What of these taketh away fear, and bridleth concupiscence? Metiri me Geometer docet latifundia:*

latifundia : potius doceat quomodo metiar quantum homini satis sit : Docet quomodo nihil perdam ex finibus meis : at ego discere volo quomodo totum hilaris amittam. Scis rotunda metiri : si artifex es, metire hominis animum; die quam magnus, die quam pusillus sit. Scis quæ recta sit linea : quid tibi prodest si quid in vita rectum sit ignoras?] *The Geometrian teacheth me to measure spacious grounds : let him rather teach me to measure how much is sufficient for a man : He teacheth me how I may lose nothing of my possessions : But that which I would learn is, how I may lose all with a cheerfull mind. Thou canst measure rounds ; if thou be an artist, measure the mind of man ; tell me how great it is, or how little or low. Thou knowest a strait line : and what the better art thou if thou know not what is right or strait in thy own life?*] *Hoc scire quid proderit, ut solicitus sim, quum* Saturnus & Mars *è contrario stabunt?* —— *Illa liberalium artium consectatio molestos, intempestivos, verbosos, sibi placentes facit, & ideo non discentes necessaria, quia supervacua didicerunt*] [*What good will it do me, that I should be solicitous to know when* Saturn *and* Mars *will stand in opposition?* —— *This diligent study of the liberal arts,*

arts, doth make men troublesome, unseasonable, wordy, self-pleasing, and such as therefore learn not things necessary, because they have learned things superfluous.]

When our *nearer greater* works are done, *then* those that are more *distant* will be *seasonable*, and *usefull*, and *excellent* in their proper places. When men understand the state and affairs of their *souls*, and have made sure of their everlasting happiness, they may then *seasonably* and *wisely* manage Political and Oeconomical affairs, and prudently order and prosecute their *temporal* concernments: when they *first seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, subordinate things may be seasonably considered. But for a man to be taken up about matters of *Law*, or *Trade*, or *Pleasure*, when he mindeth not the matters of his *salvation*; and to study *languages, Arts* and *Sciences*, when he studieth not how to *escape damnation*, is not to be *Learned*, but to dote; nor to be *honourably* or *prudently* employed, but to walk as a *noctambulo*, a man in a dream, and live besides the Reason of a man, as well as below the faith of a Christian: These seemingly wise and honourable worldlings, that labour not to know what state and relation they stand in

n towards God, and his Judgement, do ive in a more pernicious distraction then he that is *disputing in mood and figure* while his *house is burning over his head*, or he that is *learning to fiddle or dance*, when he is *assaulted by an enemy*, or to be *tryed for his life*.

Even works of *charity* seem but *absurd prepposterous acts*, in those that are not *charitable to themselves*. To be carefull to *feed* or *cloath* the *bodies* of the *poor*, and senseless of the nakedness & misery of your *own souls*, is an irrational distracted course of Mercy: As if a man should be diligent to cure *another* of a *boyl*, while he minds not the *plague* or *leprosie* upon *himself*: or should be busie to pull a *thorn* out of anothers finger, and senseless of a *stab* thats given *himself* in the *bowels* or at the *heart*. *To Love your self*, and *not your neighbour*, is *selfish*, *unsociable* and *uncharitable*. To *Love neither your neighbour nor your self*, is *inhumane*: To *Love your neighbour and not your self* is *prepposterous*, *irrational*, and scarcely possible. But to *Love first your self* (next God,) and *then to Love your neighbour as your self*, is *regular*, *orderly*, *Christian Charity*.

10. Consider also, that the *Ignorance of your*

your ſelves, doth much unfit you to be uſefull unto others. If you are Magiſtrates, you will never be ſoundly faithfull againſt the ſin of others, till you have felt how hurtfull it is to your ſelves. If you are Miniſters, you will ſcarce ever be good at *heart-ſearching* work, till you have *ſearcht your own:* Nor will you know the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and the turnings and windings of the crooked Serpent, till you have obſerved them in your ſelves: Nor will you have due compaſſion on the ignorant, impenitent, ungodly, unconverted, or on the tempted, weak, diſconſolate ſouls, till you have learned rightly to be affected with ſin and miſery in *your ſelves.* If men ſee a Magiſtrate puniſh offenders, or hear a Miniſter reprove them, that is as bad or worſe himſelf, they will but deride the *Juſtice* of the one, and *reproofs* of the other, as the acts or words of blind partiality and hypocriſie; and accoaſt you with a *Medice cura teipſum*, Phyſitian heal thy ſelf: with a *Loripidem rectus derideat, Æthiopem albus*, &c.——and a *Primus juſſa ſubi*, &c. and a *Qui alterum incuſat probri, ipſum ſe intueri oportet*] Firſt ſweep before your own door. Its ridiculous for the blind to reproach the pur-blind: *Qua in aliis reprehendis*

rehendis, in teipso maximè reprehende. Reprehend that more in thy self, which thou reprehendest in another. The eye of the soul is not like the eye of the body, that can see other things, but not it self. There are two evils that Christ noteth in the *reproofs* of such as are *unacquainted with themselves, in* Math. 7. 3, 4. *Hypocrisie* and *Unfitness to reprove.* [*Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the moat out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thy own eye? Thou Hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the moat out of thy brothers eye.*] Thy own vices do corrupt thy judgement, and cause thee to *excuse* the *like* in others, and to *accuse* the *virtue* that in others is the condemner of thy vice, and to represent all as odious that is done by those that by their piety and reproofs are become odious to thy guilty and malicious soul. Dost thou hate a holy heavenly life, and art void of the love of God, and of his servants? Hast thou a carnal, dead, unconverted heart? art thou a presumptuous, careless, worldly wretch? Hast thou these

beams

beams in thy own eye? and art *thou* fit to quarrel with others that are better then thy self, about a *Ceremony* or a *Holy day*, or a *circumstance of Church-Government* or *Worship*, or a *doubtfull controverted opinion*: and to be pulling these *motes out of thy Brothers eye?* (Yea, rather wouldst pull out his eyes, to get out the mote:) *First* get an illuminated mind; and a renewed Sanctified heart; be acquainted with the Love of God, and of his Image; and cast out the beam of infidelity, ungodlines, worldlines, sensuality, malice and hypocrisie, from thine own eye; and *then come* and play the Oculist with *thy brother*, and help to cure *him* of his *lesser involuntary errors* and *infirmities*. Till *then* the *beam* of thy sensuality and impiety will make thee a very incompetent Judge, of the *mote* of a *different opinion* in thy *brother*. Every word that thou speakest in *condemnation* of thy *brother*, for his *opinion* or *infirmity*, is a *double condemnation of thy self* for thy *ungodly, fleshly life*. And if thou wilt needs have *judgement to begin at the house of God*, for the failings of his sincere and faithfull servants, it may remember thee to thy terror *what the end of them shall be that obey not the Gospel of God*: And if you will condemn

demn the righteous for their lamented weaknesses, *where* think you *the ungodly and the sinner shall appear?* 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.

11. If you begin not *at your selves, you can make no progress to a just and edifying knowledge of extrinsick things.* Mans *self* is the Alphabet or Primer of his learning. *Non pervenitur ad summa nisi per inferiora.* You cannot come to the top of the stairs, if you begin not at the bottom. *Frustra cordis oculum erigit ad videndum Deum, qui non idoneus est ad videndum seipsum: Prius enim est ut cognoscas invisibilia spiritus tui, quàm possis esse idoneus ad cognoscendum invisibilia Dei; & si non potes te cognoscere, non præsumas apprehendere ea quæ sunt supra te (inquit. Hug. de Anim.) i.e.* [In vain doth he lift up his heart to see God, that is yet unfit to see himself. For thou must first know the invisible things of thy own spirit, before thou canst be fit to know the invisible things of God. And if thou canst not know thy self, presume not to know the things that are above thy self.] You cannot see the face which it representeth, if you will not look upon the glass which representeth it. *God* is *not visible*, but appeareth to

us

us in his *creatures*; and eſpecially in *our ſelves*. And if we *know not our ſelves*, we cannot *know God in our ſelves*. [*Principium & principale eſt ſpeculum ad videndum Deum animus rationalis intuens ſeipſum* (inq. Hug.) *The principal glaſs for the beholding of God, is the Reſonable ſoul beholding it ſelf.*

And you will make but an unhappy progreſs in your ſtudy of the *Works of God*, if you begin not with your ſelves. You can know but little of the *Works of Nature*, till you know your *own nature*: And you can know as little of the *Works of Grace*, till *ſelf-acquaintance* help you to know the nature and danger of thoſe *diſeaſes* that *Grace* muſt cure. The unhappy error of preſumptuous *ſtudents*, about their *own hearts*, miſleadeth and perverteth them in the whole courſe of their ſtudies; that by all, they do but profit in miſapplied notions and ſelf-deceit. Its a lamentable ſight to ſee a man turning over Fathers and Councils, and diligently ſtudying words and notions, that is himſelf in the *gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity, and never knew it*, nor ſtudieth the cure. And its a pitifull thing to ſee ſuch in a *Pulpit*, teaching the people to know the myſteries of ſalvation,

tion, that know not, nor ever laboured to know, what sins are predominant in their own hearts and lives; or Whether they stand before God in a justified or a condemned state! To hear a poor *unsanctified* man, as *boldly* treating of the mysteries of *sanctification*, as if he had felt them in himself: and a man that is *condemned already*, and stayeth but a while till the stroke of death, for final execution, to treat as calmly of judgement and damnation, as if he were out of danger; and exhorting others to escape the misery which he is in himself, and never dreameth of it! This sheweth how sad a thing it is for men to be *ignorant of themselves*. To see men run out into damnable and dangerous errors on each hand, some into the *proud self-conceitedness* of the Phanaticks, Enthusiasts and Libertines, and some into *contempt* and *scorn of holiness*, and every one confident even to rage in his own distractions; this doth but shew us, whither men will go, that are *unacquainted with themselves*.

This also maketh us so *troubled* with our *auditors*, that when they would learn the truth that should convert and save them, are carping and quarrelling with us, and

hear us as the Phariſees and Herodians heard Chriſt, to catch him in his words, *Mark.* 12. 13. As if a dying man in a conſumption, imagining that he is well, ſhould go to the Phyſicion to make a *jeaſt* of him, or ſeek to ruine him for telling him that he is ſick. And how frowardly do they reject the wiſeſt counſel, and caſt the medicine with unthankfull indignation into the face of the Phyſicion? And they muſt *tell us themſelves what medicine* muſt be given them, what doctrine, and what adminiſtrations they muſt have. But *ſelf-acquaintance* would teach them to underſtand that of *Auguſtine* [*Novit medicus quid ſalutiferum, quidve contrarium petat agrotus. Ægroti eſtis, nolite ergo dictare quæ vobis medicamnia velit opponere.*]

Yea, they that *will not* be *directed* or *healed* by us, will blame us if *others be not healed*, and hit the Miniſter in the teeth with the errors and faults of his *unteachable hearers*. Though we do our beſt in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and they cannot tell us what we have neglected on our part that was like to do the cure (though I confeſs we are too often negligent :) and though we ſucceed to the converſion of *many others* ; yet muſt *we* be reproached with the *diſobedience* of the

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impenitent! as if it were not *grief enough* to us, to have our *labours frustrate*, and see them obstinate in their sin and misery, but we must also be *blamed* or *derided* for *our calamity!*

Fecerit & postquam quicquid jubet ipsa medendi
Norma, nisi valeat subitoq; revixerit æger,
Murmurat insipiens vulgus, linguaq; loquaci,
Et loquitur de te convitia, talia jactans,
Heu mihi, quam stultum est medicorum credere nugis!

As if they knew not the *power of the disease*; and what a wonder of mercy it is that *any* and *so many* are recovered.

Non est in medico semper relevetur ut æger;
Interdum docta plus valet arte malum.

None would *die* if *Physicions* could *cure all*: And none would *perish* if *Ministers* could *save all*. *Rhetor non semper persuadebit, nec medicus semper sanabat*, saith the Philosopher. They cast away the medicine, and then blame the Physicion. *Crudelem vel infelicem medicum intemperans*

eger facit. An intemperate unruly patient maketh the Phyſition ſeem cruel or unſucceſsfull.

12. Laſtly conſider but how *many*, how *great* and *neceſſary* things *concerning your ſelves* you have to *know*, and it will ſhew you how needfull it is to make this the firſt of your ſtudies. To know what you are as men; with what faculties you are endowed, and to what uſe; for what end you live; in what Relation you ſtand to God and to your fellow creatures; what duties you owe; what ſin is in your hearts; and what hath been by commiſſion and omiſſion in your lives; what humiliation, contrition and repentance you have for that ſin; Whether you have truly entertained an offered Chriſt; and are renewed and ſanctified by his ſpirit; and unreſervedly devoted to God, and reſolved to be entirely his: Whether you Love him above all, and your neighbours as your ſelves; Whether you are Juſtified and have forgiveneſs of all your ſins; Whether you can bear afflictions from the hand, or for the ſake of Chriſt, even to the forſaking of all the world for the hopes of the heavenly everlaſting treaſure; how you perform the daily works of your relations and callings;

Whether

Whether you are ready to die, and are safe from the danger of damnation. O did you but know how it concerneth you to get all these questions well resolved, you would find more *matter* for your *studies* in *your selves*, then in many volumes. You would then perceive that the matters of your *own hearts and lives*, are not so lightly and carelesly to be past over, as they ordinarily be by drowsie sinners: To consider but *Quid*, *Quis*, *Qualis sis*; *Quid in natura*, *Quis in persona*, *Qualis in vita* (*ut Bern.*) would find you no small labour. And it would redound (saith another) *in utilitatem sui*, *charitatem proximi*, *contemptum mundi*, *amorem Dei: to our own profit, charity to our neighbour, the contempt of the world, and the love of God.*

If you have but many & weighty businesses to think on in the world, you are so taken up with care, that you cannot turn away your thoughts. And yet do you find no work at home, where you have such a world of things to think on, and such as of all the matters in the world, do nearliest concern you?

Having ſhewed you ſo much Reaſon for this duty, let me now take leave to *invite you all, to the ſerious ſtudy of your ſelves.* It is a duty paſt all controverſie agreed on by *heathens* as well as Chriſtians, and *urged* by them in the *generall,* though many of the *particulars* to be knowne are beyond their light: It *brutifyeth* man to be ignorant of himſelf. *Man that is in honour and underſtandeth not* (himſelf eſpecially) *is as the beaſts that periſh.* Pſal. 49. 20. ſaith *Boetius*, [*Humana natura infra beſtias redigitur, ſi ſe noſſe deſierit: Nam cæteris animantibus ſeſe ignorare natura eſt; hominibus vitio venit*] Its *worſe then beaſtly to be ignorant of our ſelves, it being a vice in us, which is nature in them.*

Come home you wandering ſelf-neglecting ſouls; Loſe not your ſelves in a wilderneſs or tumult of impertinent, vaine, diſtracting things; your work is neerer you; The country that you ſhould firſt ſurvey and travaile, is *within you*; from which you muſt paſs to that *above you*: when by loſing your ſelves in this *without you*, you will find your ſelves before you are aware, in that *below you.* And then

(as

(as Gregory speakes) he that was *stultus in culpa*, *a foole in sining*, will be *sapiens in pœna*, *wise in suffering*! you shall then have time enough to review your lives, and such constraining help to *know your selves*, as you cannot resist. O that you would *know* but *a little of* that *now*, that then *you must elss know* in that overwhelming evidence which will everlastingly confound you! And that you would *now* thinke of that for a timely cure, which els *must* be thought of endlesly in despair. Come *home* then, and see what work is there. Let the *eyes of fooles be in the corners of the earth!* Leave it to men *besides themselves*, to live as *without themselves*, and to be still from home, and waste that time in other businesss, that was given them to prepare for life eternall. [*Laudabilior est animus, cui nota est infirmitas propria, quam qui ea non perspecta, mania mũdi, vias syderum, fundamenta terrarum, & fastigia cælorum scrutatur*] *inquit Augustt.* [*The soule is more laudable that knowes its own infirmity, then he that without discerning this doth search after the compass of the world, the courses of the starres, the foundations of the earth, and the heights of the heavens.*] Dost thou delight in the mysteryes of *nature?* consider well

the myſteryes of thy own. *Mirantur aliqui altitudines montium, ingentes fluctus maris, altiſſimos lapſus fluminum, & Oceani ambitum, & gyros ſyderum, & relinquunt ſeipſos, nec mirantur*]. ſaith Auguſtine [*ſome men admeire the heights of mountaines, the huge waves of the ſea, the great falls of the rivers, the compaſs of the Ocean and the circuit of the ſtars, and they paſſe by them themſeves without admiration*] The compendium of all that thou ſtudyeſt *without* thee, is *neer thee*, even *within thee, thy ſelf* being the epitome of the world. If either neceſſiry or duty, nature or grace, reaſon or faith, internall inducements, external repulſes, or eternall attractives and motives, might determine of the ſubject of your ſtudies and contemplations; you would call home your loſt diſtracted thoughts, and employ them more on yourſelves and *God*.

But before I urge this duty further, I muſt prevent the miſapplication of ſome troubled ſoules; I muſt confeſs it is a *grievous* thing for *a guilty ſoul* to *judge it ſelf*, and ſee its own deformity and danger: And I obſerve many troubled humbled ſoules,

ſoules, eſpecially where melancholy much prevailes, are exceeding prone to abuſe this duty, by *exceſs* and by *miſdoing it:* Though *wandering minds* muſt be *called home*, we muſt not run into the other extreame, and ſhut up our ſelves, and wholly dwell on the motions of our owne diſtempered hearts: Though *ſtragling* thoughts muſt be *turned inward*, and our hearts muſt be *watched*, and not neglected; yet muſt we not be *alwayes poreing on our ſelves*, and neglect the reſt of our intellectual converſe: To look too long on the running of a ſtream will make our eyes miſjudge of what we after look on, as if all things had the ſame kind of motion: To look too long on the turning of a wheele, will make us vertiginous, as if all turnd round. And to pore too long on the diſordered motions, the confuſed thoughts, the wants, the paſſions of our diſeaſed minds, will but moleſt us, and caſt us into greater diſquiet and confuſion. The words of *Anſelme* notably expreſs the ſtreights that Chriſtians are here put to [*O nimis gravis anguſtia, ſi me inſpicio, non tolero meipſum: ſi non inſpicio, neſcio meipſum: ſi me conſidero, terret me facies mea: ſi me non conſidero, fallit me damnatio mea; ſi me* video, *horror*

eſt

est intolerabilis: si non video, mors est inevitabilis.] [*O grievous streight! If I look into my self, I cannot endure my self: if I look not into my self I cannot know my self. If I consider my self, my own face affrighteth me: if I consider not my self, my damnation deceiveth me: If I see my self, the horror is intolerable: if I see not my self, death is unavoidable.*]

In this streight we must be carefull to avoid *both extreames*; and nether *neglect* the study of our selves, nor yet *exceed* in *poreing on our selves.* To be *carelesly ignorant* of *our selves*, is to *undoe our selves* for ever: To be *too much* about *our selves*, is to *disquiet* rather then to *edyfie our selves*; and to turne a great and *necessary duty* into a great *unnecessary trouble.*

Consider, 1. that we have *many other matters* of great importance to study and know when we know our selves. We must chiefly study *God himself*; and all the Books of *Scripture*, *Nature* and *Governing providence* which make him known. What abundance of great and excellent Truths, have we in all these to study. What time, what industrie is necessary to understand them? And should we lay out *all this time* about our *own hearts* and *actions*, which is but *one part* of our study. What sinful omis-

sions

ions should we be guilty of in the ne-
lecting of all these! It is indeed but the
urying of our talent of understanding,
o *confine* it to so narrow a compass as *our*
elves, and to omit the study of God, and
is word and workes, which are all with
lelight and diligence to be studyed.

We have also *Christ and his Gospell myste-*
ies and benefits to study. We have the
hurches ease, its *dangers*, *sufferings*, and
leliverances to study: We have the state of
our *neighbours* and *brethren* to consider of: The
mercyes, and *dangers*, and *sufferings* both of
heir soules and *bodyes*: we have our *enemies*
o thinke of with due compassion: and our
duty to all these.

2. And as it is *negligence* and *omission*
o be *all at home*, and pass by so great a
part of duty; so is it *a double frustration of*
our labour, and will *make* even *this study*
of ourselves to be in vaine. 1. We cannot
come by all our study to the true *know-*
ledge of our selves, unless we also study
ther things besides *our selves*. For we are
Related to God, as his *creatures*, as his
Own, as his *subjects* and as his *dependant*
children, as his *Redeemed*, and his *sanctified*
ones, (or such as *should* be such) And if
we know not *God* as *Creatour*, *Redeemer*
and

and *Sanctifyer*; as our *Owner*, *Ruler* and *Benefactor*; and know not what his *creation*, *Redemption*, *ſanctification*, his *Title Government* and *Benefits* meane, it is not poſſible thatwe ſhould *know our ſelves*. *Mutuall Relations* muſt be known *together*, or *neither* can be known.

2. And if we *could know our ſelves*, and know *no more*, it were but to know *Nothing*, and loſe that knowledge. For this is but the *enterance* into wiſdome, and the *meanes* and *way* to *higher* knowledge. This learning of our *Alphabet* or *Primer* is *loſt*, if we learn *no further*; you are *therefore* to ſtudy and know *your ſelves* that you may advance to the knowledge of *Chriſt* and *his grace*, and be acquainted wich the *Remedie* of all that you find amiſs at *home*: and that by Chriſt you may be brought unto the *Father*, and *know God* as your *happineſs* and *reſt*; you are not your own ultimate ends, and therefore muſt goe further in your ſtudyes then yourſelves.

3. We ſhall never attaine to *Rectitude* or *ſolid comfort* and *content*, unleſs our ſtudyes goe *further* then *ourſelves*. *For we* are not the *Rule* to *our ſelves*, but *crooked lines!* and cannot know what is *right* and *wrong*, if we ſtudy not the *Rule* as well as *ourſelves*

our selves. And alas, we are *diseased, miserable sinners.* And to be *always* looking on so sad a spectacle, can bring no *peace* or *comfort* to the mind. To be *still* looking on the *sore*, and hearing only the cry of conscience, will be but a foretaste of Hell. When we would be *humbled* and have matter of *lamentation*, we must look *homeward*, where the *troubling* thorns and nettles of corruption grow. But if we would be *comforted* and *lift up*, we must look *higher*, to *Christ* and to his *promises*, and to *everlasting life: our* garden beareth no flowers or fruits that are so cordial.

This much I have spoke by way of *Caution*, 1. That you may not think I am driving you into the *extream* of *solitude*, and *confining* or *imprisoning* you at home. 2. Because some scarce know how to avoid a *fault*, without running into *another* on the other side the way: nor how to understand the *right use* of a doctrine, but are turning it into an *abuse*, and building *sin* upon the foundation of righteousness.

Two sorts of persons have great need of this caution, that *they dwell not too much on themselves.* One is *poor Melancholy people* that can think of almost nothing else: Their distemper disposeth them to be alwayes

wayes poring on themſelves, and fixing their thoughts on their ſin and miſery, and ſearching into all their own miſcarriages, and making them worſe then indeed they are: You *cannot call off* their thoughts from *continual ſelf-condemning*, and *muſing* on their *own miſdeings* and *unhappineſs*. They have a *God*, a *Chriſt*, a *heaven*, a treaſure of *precious promiſes* to meditate on; and they cannot hold their thoughts to *theſe*, (unleſs as they aggravate their ſin and ſorrows,) but live as if they had nothing to think on but *themſelves*; and were made to be their *own tormentors*: day and night even when they ſhould labour, and when they ſhould ſleep, they are buſie in a fruitleſs vexation of themſelves. Theſe poor afflicted ſouls have need to be called from the *exceſſive ſtudy of themſelves.*

Another ſort is, thoſe Chriſtians that are *wholly taken up in enquiring whether they have ſaving grace or not*; while they neglect that exerciſe of their grace, in doing all the good they can to others, and following on the way of faithfull duty, which might do more to their aſſurance, then ſolitary tryals.

The *former ſort* by *overdoing* in this *one* part

part of their work, disable themselves to *all the rest*. They tire and distract their minds, and raise such fears as hinder their understandings, and cast their thoughts into such confusion, that they quite lose the command of them, and cannot gather them up for any holy work: Yea while they study nothing but *themselves*, they lose even the knowledge of *themselves*: They gaze so long upon their *faults* and *wants*, till they can see *nothing else*; and know no apprehensions but *dark* and *sad*; and wilfully unlearn the language of thanksgiving and praise; and the burden of all their thoughts and speeches, is, *Miserable* and *Undone*: as if there were for them *no mercy, no help, no hope*, but they were *utterly forsaken* and *cast off by God*.

The *other sort*, do so exceed in the *measure* of that *self-love*, which in *it self is good*, that they neglect the study of the *Love of God*; And are still thinking what they are and *have been*; when they should consider what they *must* be. They spend so much time in trying their *foundation*, that they can make but little progress in the building. They are lik *Musicians* that will spend all the day in setting *Instruments* in tune; Or like a *Mower* that spends most of

of his time in *whetting*. They are all day *preparing their tools* while they ſhould be *working!* And putting on their *armour*, and preparing their *weapons*, when they ſhould be *fighting*: And *enquiring which is the way*, while they ſhould be *travelling*. They leave undone too much of their work *without doors* while they confine themſelves to that *within*: And that *within* goes on the worſe, becauſe they neglect that *without doors*, which ſhould further it. When they ſhould inſtruct the ignorant, exhort the obſtinate, confirm the weak, or comfort the afflicted, they are complaining of their *own* ignorance, obſtinacy, weakneſs, or affliction; and help not others becauſe they feel ſuch need of help themſelves: As if they were like beggars, that had *nothing* to *give*, but muſt live by *asking* and *receiving*: They underſtand not that its one of the *myſteries* of godlineſs, that *teaching others* doth *inform themſelves*, and the Light which they bring in for others, will ſerve themſelves to work by; and that *reproving others* doth *correct themſelves*: and *exhorting others* doth *prevail* with *themſelves*; and *perſwading* the obſtinate wills of others, doth tend to *bend* and *reſolve their own*; & that *comforting others* doth tend to *revive*

and

and raise themselves: Their *own* spirits may be a little revived, by the very smell of the Cordials they prepare for others. In this case, *Giving* is both *Begging* and *Receiving*. *Doing good* is not the least effectual kind of *prayer*: And that we may be so imployed, is not the smallest *mercy*. Many a one hath thus grown *rich* by *giving*: Many a one hath *convinced himself* by *confuting his own objections* from another: And many a one hath *raised* and *comforted himself*, by offering comfort to others that have the *same infirmities*; and have banished their *own excessive doubts* and fears, by frequent compassionate answering the same in others whose sincerity they have less suspected then their own.

None thrive more then they that grow in the Sun shine of *Gods blessing*: And *God blesseth* those most that are most faithfull in his work: And the *work of Love*, is the *work of God*. To *do good*, is to be *most like him*: And they that are *most like him*, do best *please him*: In *subordination to Christ*, in whom we are *accepted*, we must by his spirit be made *thus acceptable in our selves*: We must be *amiable* if we will be *loved*. And those that God *loveth best*, and is *most pleased* with, are like to *receive* most plenteously from his Love. It is necessary

therefore to our *own safety*, and *holiness*, and *consolation*, that we *look much abroad* at the *necessities of others*, and study our *brethren*, and *the Church of God*, as well as *our selves*: That we *look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*, Phil. 2. 4.

There may be somewhat of *inordinate selfishness*, even about our *souls*: And *sinfull selfishness* is alwayes a *losing course*. As he that will be a *self-saver* in point of *estate*, or *honour*, or *life*, taketh the ready way to *lose* them (*Mat.* 16. 15.) so he that for the *saving of his soul*, will confine all his care and charity *to his own soul*, taketh not the *way indeed* to *save it*. We *keep not our selves*; We *quicken not*; We *comfort not*; We *save not* our selves; but only as agents under Christ, manuring the land, and *sowing* the seed, to which he alone can give the blessing: It is not therefore our *inordinate self-studying* that will do it: With all our care, without his blessing, we cannot add one cubit to the stature of our graces: Therefore it must needs be our safest course, to be as carefull and faithfull as we can *in duty*, and lay out *most* of our study to *please him*; and then if we come not to assurance of his love, or discern not his image and grace upon us, yet we must

must trust him with our souls, and leave the rest to his Care and Goodness, that hath undertaken that none shall be losers by him, nor be ashamed or frustrate of their hopes, that wait upon him, and obey him: Let us *commit the keeping of our souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithfull Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. *As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their Masters*——so our eyes (in a way of duty) must *wait upon the Lord our God, till he have mercy upon us*, Psal. 123. 1, 2. And though we *grow weary of crying, and our throat be dryed, and our eyes fail while we wait for God*, (Psal. 69. 3.) yet *our hope is only in him*, and therefore we must continue to *wait upon him*, Psal. 39. 7. *And they that wait for him shall not be ashamed*, Isa. 49. 23.

It is not the pretended *necessity* of *one work*, that will excuse him that hath *many as necessary* to do: Especially when they are *conjunct* in *nature* and *necessity*, and must go together, to attain their end. Concerning *God*, as we may well say that we must *Love and serve him only*, and *none but him*, because we must Love nothing but for his sake, and as a *means* to *him* the *End* of all: and so while it is *God in all things* that we Love, we are more pro-

perly ſaid to *Love God* then the *Creature* by that act, becauſe he is the Ultimate firſt intended *end*, and principal *object* of that *Love*; And as the *means*, as a *means*, hath its eſſence in its *relation to the End*; ſo the *Love of the means, as ſuch*, is accordingly ſpecified: And ſo we may ſay of our *ſtudy* and *Knowledge of God*, that *nothing but God* is to be ſtudied or known: becauſe it is *God in the creature* that muſt be ſtudied: It is a defective Similitude (as all are) to ſay, [*As it is the face that we behold the glaſs for:*] For *God* is *more* in the *creature* then the *face* in the *glaſs*. But though all the *means* be *united* in the *End*, yet are they *various* among *themſelves*. And therefore though we muſt ſtudy, know and Love *nothing but God*; yet muſt we ſtudy, know and Love many things *beſides our ſelves*: The means that are many, muſt all be thought on. More *ſtrings* muſt be touched then *one* (how near ſoever) if we will have any Muſick. More *Letters* muſt be learned than [*I,*] or we ſhall never learn to read.

All men will confeſs that to confine our *charity* to *our ſelves*, and to do good to no others, is unlike a Chriſtian: To deny to feed and clothe our Brother in his need,

is

is to deny it unto Christ: And it will be no excuse, if we were able, to say, *I laid it ont upon my self.* And the objects of our *charity* must be the objects of our thoughts and care: And it will not suffice for our excuse, to say, [*I was taken up at home; I had a miserable soul of my own to think on.*]

And yet if these *self-studying* souls, that confine almost all their thoughts unto *themselves*, would but seek after *God in themselves*, and see his *grace*, and *benefits*, it were the better: But poor souls, in the darkness of temptation, they overlook their *God*; and most of their study of *themselves*, is to see *Satan* aud *his workings* in *themselves:* To find as much of *his image* as they can, in the *deformities* or *infirmities* of their souls; but the *image of God* they overlook, and hardly will acknowledge. And so, as *noble objects raise* the soul, and *amiable* objects kindle *love*, and *comfortable* objects fill it with *delight*; and *God*, who is *all* in *One perfection*, doth *elevate* and *perfect* it, and make it *happy*; so *inferiour* objects do *depress* it; and *ugly loathsome* objects fill it with *distaste* and *loathing*; and *sad* and *mournfull* objects turn it into *grief*; And therefore to be *still* looking on our *miseries*, and *deformities*, must needs turn

calamity and wo into the *temperament* and *complexion* of the ſoul.

This much I thought needfull to be ſpoken here to prevent miſunderſtanding and miſapplication: that while I am preſſing you to *ſtudy* and *know your ſelves*, I may not encourage any in extreams, nor tempt them to make an ill uſe of ſo great and neceſſary a doctrine: And indeed the obſervation of the ſad calamity of many poor drooping afflicted ſouls, that are ſtill poreing exceſſively on their own hearts, commanded me not to overpaſs this caution. And yet when I have done it, I am afraid leſt thoſe in the *contrary extream*, will take *encouragement* to *neglect themſelves*, by my reprehenſions of thoſe that are ſo unlike them.

And therefore I muſt add, to ſave them from deceit; 1. That it is but a *very few* that are faulty in *overſtudying themſelves*, in compariſon of the many thouſands that err on the other hand in the *careleſs neglecting* of *themſelves*. 2. And that it is *ſymptomatically* and *effectively* far more *dangerous*, to ſtudy your ſelves *too little*, then *too much*. Though it be a fault *here* to *exceed*, yet it is for the moſt part a ſign of an honeſt heart to be *much at home*,

and

and a sign of an Hypocrite to be *little at home* and *much abroad*. *Sincerity* maketh men *censurers* of *themselves*. For it maketh them more *impartial*, and *willing* to know the truth of their condition: It cureth them of that folly that before made them think that presumption shall deliver them, and that they shall be *Justified* by believing *promises* of *their own*, though *contrary* to the *word of God*; yea, by *believing* the *promises of the Devil*, and calling this *a Faith in Christ*: They are *awakened* from that *sleep* in which they *dreamed* that *winking* would save them from the *stroke of Justice*, and that a strong *conceit* that they shall not be damned, will deliver them from damnation; and that they are *safe from Hell* if they can but believe that there *is no Hell*, or can but *forget* it, or escape the *fears* of it. These are the pernicious Conclusions of the ungodly, discernable in their lives, and intimated in their presumptuous reasonings, though too gross to be *openly* and *expressly* owned: And therefore they are undisposed to any impartial acquaintance with themselves.

But grace recovereth men from this distraction; and makes them know that the *Judgement of God* will not *follow* the *con-*

ceits of *men*; and that the *knowledge* of their *disease* is necessary to their *cure*; and the *knowledge* of their *danger* is necessary to the *prevention*; and that its the greatest madness to *go on to Hell*, for fear of *knowing* that we *are in the way*; and to *refuse to know it*, for *fear* of being *troubled* at the news.

And an upright soul is so far *fallen out* with *sin*, that he taketh it seriously for his *enemy*; and therefore is willing to *discover it* in order to its *destruction*; and willing to *search* after it in order to a *discovery*.

And he hath in him some measure of the *heavenly illumination*, which maketh him a *child of light*, and disposeth him to *love the light*, and therefore *cometh to it that his deeds may be made manifest*, Joh. 3. 21. Hypocrites are quick-sighted in discovering *infirmities* of *others*; but at *home* they shut the windows, and draw the curtains, that they may not be disturbed or frightened in their sin; Thieves and sleepers choose not light: Darkness suits the works of darkness. It is a good sign when a man *dare* see his *own face* in the glass of *Gods word*; and when he *dare* hear his *conscience speak*. I have ever observed it in the most *sincere-hearted Christians*, that their eye is

more

more upon their *own hearts and lives*, than upon *others*: and I have ſtill obſerved the moſt *unſound profeſſors* to be leaſt cenſorious and regardfull of *themſelves*, and hardly drawn to converſe at *home*, and to paſs an impartial judgement on themſelves.

HEnce therefore you may be informed of the reaſon of many other differences between ſincere Believers and the Ungodly. As 1. Why it is that the *ſincere* are ſo ready to *diſcourſe* about matters of the *heart*; and that they ſo much *reliſh* ſuch *diſcourſe*; and that they have ſo much *to ſay* when you come to ſuch a *ſubject*. It is becauſe they *know themſelves* in ſome good meaſure. They have *ſtudied*, and are *acquainted* with the *Heart*; And therefore can *talk* the more ſenſibly of what is contained in a *book* which they have ſo *often read*, and are ſo converſant in. Talk with them about the matters of the *world*, and perhaps you may find them more ſimple and ignorant then many of their neighbours; But when you talk about the *Corruptions* of the *heart*, and the *ſecret workings* of them; the *matter*, and *order*, and *government* of the *thoughts*,

thoughts, and *affections*, and *paſſions*; the *wants* and *weakneſſes* of believers; the *nature* and *workings* of inward *temptations*; the wayes of grace, and of the exerciſe of each grace; the motions and operations of the ſpirit upon the heart; the breathings of Love and deſire after God; the addreſſes of the ſoul to Chriſt by faith, and dependance on him, and receivings from him; about theſe *ſecret* matters of the *Heart*, he is uſually more *able in diſcourſe*, then many *learned men* that are *unſanctified*.

And hence it is that upright ſelf-obſerving ſouls are ſo *full in prayer*, and able to pour out their *hearts* ſo *enlargedly* before the Lord, in confeſſing their ſins, and petitioning for grace, and opening their neceſſities, and thanking God for ſpiritual mercies! Some that are themſelves acquainted with *themſelves*, and the workings of grace, deſpiſe all this, and ſay, *It is but an ability to ſpeak of the things which they are moſt uſed to*. I doubt not but meer *acquired abilities* and *cuſtom* may advance ſome *hypocrites*, to pray in the language of experienced Chriſtians. And I doubt not but *natural impediments*, and want of *uſe*, and of right education, may cauſe many to want

convenient

convenient expressions, that have true *desires*. But the question is, from *whence it comes to pass*, that so great a *number* of those that are most carefull and diligent for their souls, are so *full* in *holy conference* and *prayer*, when very few others that *excell* them in *learning* and *natural parts*, have any such ability? And doubtless the chief reason is, that the *care and study* of these Christians, hath been most about their spiritual estate; And that which they *set* their *hearts* upon, they *use* their *tongues* upon: *Generally* it cannot be imagined, why they should *use themselves* to those *studies* and *exercises* which procure those abilities, but that they *highlyest esteem*, and most *seriously regard* the matters that concern their salvation, which are the *subject*. I doubt not but God bestoweth his *gifts* upon men in the *use of means*; and that it is partly *use* that maketh men able and ready in these services of God: But what reason can be given, why *one part of men use themselves* to such imployments, and *another part* are unable through *disuse*, but that *some* do *set their hearts* upon it, and make it their *business* to *know themselves*, their sins and wants and seek relief, when by the *others* all this is *neglected*.

Some

Some hypocrites may be moved by lower ends, both in this and in other duties of Religion; but that's no rule for our judgeing of the intentions of the *generality*, or of *any* that are *ſincere*. As a man that hath lived in the Eaſt or Weſt Indies, is able to diſcourſe of the places and people which he hath ſeen, and perhaps another by a Map or hiſtorie may ſay ſomewhat of the ſame ſubject, though leſs diſtinctly and ſenſibly; but others can ſay nothing of it: ſo a man of holy experience in the myſteries of ſanctification, that is much converſant at home, and acquainted with his own heart, is able (if other helps concur) to ſpeak what he *feels*, to God and man, and from his *particular obſervation and experience*, to frame his *prayers* and *ſpiritual conference*; and an *hypocrite* from Reading and common obſervation, may do ſomething affectedly that's like it: but careleſs ſelf-neglecting worldlings are uſually dumb about ſuch matters, and hear you as they do men of another Countrey, that talk in a language which they do not underſtand, or at leaſt cannot make them any anſwer in.

But if any of you will *needs* think more baſely and maliciouſly, of the *cauſe* of holy

ly *prayer* and *conference* in believers, let us leave them for the present (to the Justification of him that gave them the spirit of supplication which you reproach,) and let us only enquire what is the Reason that men that can discourse as handsomely as others, about worldly matters, *have nothing to say* (beyond a few cold affected words, which they have learnt by rote) either to God or man, about the matters of the soul, the methods of the spirit, the workings of a truly penitent heart, or the elevations of faith, and the pantings of desire after God. Why are *you dumb* when you should speak this language, and *frequently* and *delightfully* speak it? Is it because your *Reason* is *lower* then those mens that *do speak* it, whom you despise? and that you are *naturally* near kin to *ideots?* No; you are *wise enough* to *do evil:* You can talk of your *trades*, your *honours* or *employments*, your *acquaintance* and *correspondencies* all the day long; You are *more wordy* about these *little things*, then the Preachers themselves that you count most tedious are about the *greatest*. You are *much longer* in discoursing of your *delusory toyes*, then the *Lovers of God*, whose souls long after him, are in *those Prayers*, which

trouble

trouble you with their *length*: Many a time have I been forced to hear your dreaming incoherent dotage: how *copious* you are in words that ſignifie no greater matters then *fleſh pleaſing*, or fanciſull *honours* and *accomodations*; I had almoſt ſaid, then *chaff*, or *ſtraw* or *dirt*. One may hear you from morning to night, from day to day, diſcourſing in variety of company, on various ſubjects, with freedom and plauſible ingenuity; And when all is ſet together, it is but a *hodge podge of earth and fleſh and windy vanity*, a frothy puddle. As the ridiculous Orator, *Magno Conatu & hiatu nihil dicitis*: You *ſtrein* and *gape* an hour or a day together *to ſay nothing*: ſet all the words of a day together, and peruſe them at night, and ſee what they are worth: There's little higher then viſible materials, (that I ſay not, then the *dunghil* or your *ſhadows*,) then *meat* and *drink*, and *play* and *complement* then *houſes*, or *lands*, or *domineering affections* or *actions*, in many hours or days diſcourſe. I think of you ſometime, when I ſee how ingeniouſly and buſily *children* do make up their *babies* of *clouts*, and how *ſeriouſly* they *talk* about them, and how every pin and clout is matter of *employment* and *diſcourſe*,

course, and how *highly* they *value* them, and how many dayes they can unweariedly spend about them. Pardon my comparison: If you *repent not* of your *discourses* and *imployments more then they*, and do not one day call your selves far *worse fools* then *them*, then let me be stigmatized with the most contumelious brand of folly.

It is not then your want of *Natural faculties* and *parts* that makes you mute in the matters of God and your salvation, when men of *meaner naturals* then you do speak of those things with the greatest freedom and delight.

And sure it is not for want of an *ingenuous education*: As you would take it *ill* to be thought *below* them in *natural endowments*, so *much more* in *those acquisitions* and *furniture* of the mind, which comes by *breeding* and due culture of your Naturals. You would disdain in these to be compared with many poor rusticks and mechanicks, that are *almost* as fluent in speaking of the *great things of immortality*, as you are in talking of your *transient occurrences*, your *sublunary felicities*, and the *provisions* of your *Appetites* and your *Skins*. What then can be the cause of this *dumb disease*, but that you are *unacquainted with your selves?*

ſelves? and as you have not a *New-birth*, and a *Divine Nature*, and the *Spirit of Chriſt*, to be either the *ſpring* and *principle* or the *Matter* of your diſcourſe; ſo you have not the due *knowledge* of your *ſin* and *miſery*, which ſhould teach you the language of *ſerious Penitents*, before you have the language of *juſtified Believers*.

If you ſay again, *It is becauſe we have not been uſed to this kind of ſpeech.* I anſwer, And *whence* is it that you *have not been uſed to it*? If you had known the *Greatneſs* and *Goodneſs* of the Lord, as ſenſibly as *they*, would not you have *uſed* to *Pray* to him and *ſpeak* of him as well as *they*? If you had *known and conſidered* your *ſin*, and *wants*, and *miſeries*, or *dangers*, as well as *they*, would you not have been *uſed* to beg mercy, pardon and relief, and to complain of your diſtreſs as much as they? If you did as *highly value* the matters of Eternal conſequence as *they do*, and laid them *to heart* as *ſeriouſly* as *they*, would not your *minds* and *hearts* have appeared in your *ſpeeches*, and made you *uſe your ſelves* to *prayer* and holy *conference* as well as *others*?

If you ſay, that *many have that within them which they are not able to expreſs, or which*

which they think not meet to open unto other, I answer.

1. As to *Ability*, its true of those that have the *Impediments* of some *Natural disability*, or *excessive bashfulness*, *Melancholy* or the *like disease*; and of those that are so *lately converted*, that they have not had *time* to *learne* and *use themselves* to a *holy language*: But what's this to them that are of as good *naturall parts* and *free elocution* as other men, and *suppose themselves* to have bin *true Christians* long?

2. And as to the point of *Prudence* which is pleaded for this silence, it is so much against *Nature*, and so much against the *word of God*, that there is no roome at all for this pretence, unless it be for inferiors or such as want an opportunity to speak to their *superiours*, or to *strangers*; or unless it be only for some *particular omissions* when the thing would be *unseasonable*.

Nature hath made the *tongue* the index of the *mind*: especially to expres the matters of most urgency and concernment. Do you keep *silent* ordinarily the matters which you *highliest esteem*? which you *oftenest think of*? which you take your *life* and *happiness* to consist in? and which you are *deeplyest*

lyeſt affected with, and *prefere before all* other matters of the world? What a ſhamefull pretence is it, for thoſe that are *dumb to Prayer* and holy *conference*, for want of any due *ſenſe* of their *condition*, or *Love to God*, which ſhould open their lips, to take on them it is for want of *tongues* or becauſe their *Prudence* directeth them to ſilence? When they *hold not* their *tongues* about thoſe matters, which they muſt confeſs are ten thouſand fold *leſs regardable*; they can diſcourſe unwearyedly about their *wealth*, their *ſport*, their *friend*, their honour, becauſe they *Love them*; And if a man ſhould *here* tell them, that the Heart is not to be *opened* or *exerciſed* by the *tongue*, they would thinke he knew not the *naturall uſe* of *Heart* or *Tongue*: And yet while they pretend to *love God above all*, they have neither *ſkill* nor *will* to make expreſſion of it; you ſtrike them *dumb* when you turne the ſtreame of *conference* that way; and you may almoſt as well bid them ſpeak in a ſtrange language, as *Pray* to God from the ſenſe of their neceſſities, and yet they ſay, *their Hearts are good.*

Let the *word of God* be judge whether a Holy experienced *Heart* ſhould *hide itſelf* and *not appeare* in *Prayer* and holy *conference*

conference by the *tongue.* 1 Thess. 5. 17. *Pray continually:* Luk. 18. 1. *Christ spake a parable to this end, that men ought allwayes to pray and not waxe faint. Phil.* 4. 6. *Be carefull for nothing: but in every thing by Prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

And *How* they must *Pray*, you may gather from 2 *Chron.* 6. 29. In case of dearth, Pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts, caterpilers, enemies, sicknesses or sores, [*Then what prayer or supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all the people, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then heare thou from Heaven, &c.*] I am not speaking of the *Prescribed Prayers of the Church,* nor denying the *lawfullness of such in private.* But if you have *no words* but what you *say by rote*, and *pray* not from the *knowledge of your own particular sore and griefe*, it is because you are too much *unacquainted with yourselves*, and strangers to those *Hearts* where the *greatest* of your *sores and griefes* are lodged.

And whether *Good Hearts* should be opened in holy *Conference*, (as well as *Prayer*) you may easily determine from the commandof God: 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. 11. [*As every*

man hath received the gift, ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God] *If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the oracles of God.* Eph 4.29. [*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers*] Heb. 3. 13. [*exhort one another daily while it is called To day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfullnes of ſin.*] Pſal. 37. 30, 31. [*The mouth of the Righteous ſpeaketh wiſdome, and his tongue talketh of judgment: The Law of his God is in his heart &c*] Pſal. 71. 8. *Let my mouth be filled with thy Praiſe and with thy honour all the day.* Pro. 10. 11. *The mouth of a Righteous man is a Well of life*] 21. *The lips of the Righteous feed many*] And Chriſt himſelf decideth it expreſly, Math. 12. 34. 35. [*Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth ſpeaketh: A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things*;

For a man that hath *no Heart* to *Prayer* or *Holy conference*, but *loathes* them and is *weary* of them, and had rather talk of fleſhly pleaſures, to pretend that yet his *Heart is Good*, and that God will excuſe him for *not expreſſing it*, and that it is his *Prudence*, and his *freedome from Hypocriſie*, that maketh

keth his *tongue* to be so much *unacquainted* with the *goodness* of his *Heart*, this is but to *play the Hypocrite* to prove that he is *no Hypocrite*: and to cover his *Ignorance* in the *matters of his Salvation*, with the *expression* of his *Ignorance* of the very *nature* and *use* of *Heart* and *Tongue*, and to cast by the Lawes of God, and his owne duty, and *cover* this *impiety* with the name of *Prudence*. If *Heart* and *Tongue* be not used for *God*, what do you either with a *Heart* or *Tongue*?

The case is plaine, to men that *can see* that it is *your strangness to your selves*, that is the *cause* that you have *little to say against yourselves*, when you should *confess* your sins to God; and so *little to say for your selves*, when you should *beg his grace*; and so *little to say of your selves*, when you should *open* your *hearts* to those that can advise you: But that *you see not* that *this* is the *Cause* of your *Dumbness*, who see so little of your owne corruptions, is no wonder while you are so *strange at home*. Had you but so much *knowledge of yourselves* as to see that it is the *strangeness to your selves* that maketh you so *prayerless* and *mute*; and so much *sense* as to *complaine* of your darkness, and be willing to come into the *light*, it were a signe that *light* is com-

ing in to *you*, and that you are in a hopefull way of cure. But when you neither *know your-selves*, nor *know that you do not know your selves*, your *Ignorance* and *Pride* are like to cherish your *Presumption* and *impiety*, till the *Light of grace*, or the *fire of Hell* have taught you better to know your selves.

2. And here you may understand the reason why people fearing God are so apt to *accuse* and *condemn themselves*, to be *too much* cast downe; and why they that have cause of greatest joy, do sometimes walk more heavily then others. It is because they *know more* of their *sinfulness*, and take more *notice* of their *inward corruptions* and *outward failings*, then presumptuous sinners do of theirs. Because they know their *faults* and *wants*, they are *cast down*; But when they come *further* to see their *interest in Christ and grace*, they will be *raised up* againe. *Before* they are converted, they usually *presume*, as being ignorant of their *sin* and *misery*: In the *infancy* of grace they *know these*, but yet languish for want of more knoledge of *Christ and mercy*. But he that knoweth fully both *himself* and *Christ*, both *misery* and *mercy*, is *humbled* and *comforted*, *Cast downe* and *exalted*. As a man that *never saw* the *sea*, is not *afraid* of it;

it; and he that *seeth it* but a *farre off*, and thinks he shall never come neere it, is *not much afraid of* it: he that is *drowned in it*, is *worse then afraid:* and he that is *tossed by* the waves, and doubteth of ever coming safe to harbour, is *the fearfull person:* he that is *tossed* but hath good *hopes of* a *safe arrivall*, hath *feares* that are *abated* or overcome with hope: but he that is *safe-landed* is *past* his *feares*. The first is like him that *never saw* the misery of the ungodly: the Second is like him that *seeth it in generall*, but thinks it doth not belong to him: the third is like the damned that are *past remedie:* the fourth is like the *humbled doubting Christian*, that seeth the *danger*, but doth too much question or forget the *helpes*; the fifth is like the Christian of a *stronger faith*, that sees the *danger*, but withall seeth his *help and safety:* the sixth is like the *glorifyed saints*, that are *past the danger*.

Though the *doubting Christian* know not his *sincerity*, and therefore knoweth not *himself* so *well* as the *strong believer* doth, yet in that he *knoweth his sinfullnes* and *unworthynes*, he knoweth *himself better* then the *presumptuous* world.

These two *Remarkes*, with the foregoing *Caution*, having interposed (some what out of place) I now returne to prosecute

my *Exhortation*, that no matters may seem so sweet, so honourable, so great, or necessary, as to pass with you for excuses for the neglecting of the most diligent and impartiall study of yourselves.

All persons to whom I can addresse this Exhortation, are either Godly or ungodly; in the state of *sin*, or in the state of Grace. And both of them have need to *study themselves*.

I. And to begin with the unrenewed carnall sort, it is they that have the greatest need, to be better acquainted with themselves. O that I knew how to make them sensible of it; If any thing will doe it, me thinkes it should be done by acquainting them how much their endless state is concerned in it. In order hereunto let me yet adde to all that is said already, these few considerations;

1. *If you know not yourselves, you know not whether you are the children of God, or not: nor whether you must be for ever in Heaven or Hell*; no nor whether you may not within this houre behold the angry face of God, which will frowne you into damnation. And is *this* a matter for a man of Reason to be quietly and contentedly ignorant

ignorant of ? It is a busines of such unspeakable concernment, to know whether you must be *everlastingly in Heaven or Hell*, that no man can spare his cost *or* paines about it, without betraying and disgracing his understanding: you are *sure* you shall be *here* but a little while : Those *Bodies* you all know, will hold your *souls* but a little longer: As you know that you that are now together here attending, must presently quit *this roome* and be gone; so you know that when you have staid a little longer, you must quit *this world*, and be gone into another. And I think there is not the *proudest* of you but would be *taken downe*, nor the most *sluggish* or dead-hearted but would be *awakened*, if you *knew* that you must goe to *endless misery*, and that your dying houre would be your enterance into Hell. And if you *know not your selves*, you know not *but it may be so.* And *to know nothing to the contray*, would be *terrible* to you if you well considered it, especialy when you have so much cause to *feare* it. O Sirs, for a man to sit here senceles in these seats, that *knows not* but he may burne in Hell for ever, and knowes not because he is *blind* and *careless*; how unsuitable is it to the principle of *self love* and

self

ſelf preſervation? and how much unbeſeeming the *Rational Nature*, to have no *ſenſe* or *care*, when you looke before you, unto the unquenchable fire and the utter darkneſs where, as the Heathen Poet ſpeakes,

Nec mortis pœnas mors altera finiet hujus;
Horaque erit tantis ultima nulla malis.

If any of you thinke that all theſe matters are to be put to the adventure, and *cannot now be known*, you are dangerouſly miſtaken. As you may certainly know by *Scripture* and the *Light of Nature*, that there *is* a future Life of joy to the Godly, and of miſery to the wicked, ſo may you know by a *faithfull tryall of yourſelves*, to which of theſe at preſent you belong, and whether *you* are under the *promiſe* or the *threatening*; *know yourſelves*, and you may know whether you are *Juſtifyed* or *Condemned allready*, and whether you are the *Heires* of *Heaven* or *Hell*. Surely he that comforteth his ſervants with the *Promiſe of Glory* to all that *Believe* and are *new creatures*, and *ſanctifyed by his ſpirit, did* ſuppoſe that we *may know* whether we *Believe* and are *renewed* and *ſanctifyed* or *not:* Or els What comfort can it be to us? If blinded Infidels, have no meanes to quiet them-

themſelves but their *unbeliefe*, and a conceit that there is no ſuch Life of miſery, they have the moſt pittifull Opiate to eaſe them in the world: and may as well think to become *immortall*, by a confident conceit that they *ſhall never die*. If they befoole themſelves with the ordinary Queſtions [*where is Hell:* and *what kind of fire is it?* &c] I anſwer them with Auguſtine [*Melius eſt dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis: Illum quippe divitem in ardore pœnarum, & illum pauperem in refrigerio gaudiorum eſſe intelligendos non dubito: ſed quomodo intelligenda illa flamma in inferno, ille ſinus Abrahæ, illa divitis lingua, ille digitus pauperis, illa ſitis tormenti, illa ſtilla refrigerii, vix fortaſſe à manſuetè quærentibus, contentioſè autem ſectantibus nunquam invenitur*] that is, [*It is better to be in doubt about things that are hidden from us, then to quarrell about things that are uncertaine to us. I am paſt doubt that we muſt underſtand that that Rich man was in the heat of Paine, and the Poore man in a refreſhing place of Joyes: But how to underſtand that flame in Hell, that boſome of Abraham, that tongue of the Rich man, that finger of the poore man, that thirſt of torment, that drop for cooling or refreſhment, perhaps will hardly*

be

be found by the moſt humble enquirers, but never by contentious ſtrivers.

So that I may conclude that the greatneſs and dreadfullneſs of the caſe, ſhould make every perſon that hath an eye to ſee, an eare to heare, and a Heart to underſtand, to Read and enquire and conſider, and never reſt till they know themſelves, and underſtand *where it is* that they are going to take up their abode to everlaſting.

2. Conſider, that *All men muſt ſhortly know themſelves. Preſumption* will be but of *ſhort continuance.* Be never ſo confident of being ſaved without Holynes, you will ſpeedily be undeceived. If the *Spirits illumination* do not convince and undeceive you, *Death* will undoubtedly do it at the furtheſt. Thouſands and Millions know their ſin and miſery *now* when it is too late, that would not know it when the remedy was at hand; ſinners, your ſoules are now in *darkneſs:* your *Bodyes* are your *dungeon:* But when *Death* brings you out into the *open Light*, you will ſee what *we* could never make you *ſee.* O how glad would a faithfull minſter of Chriſt be, if by any information he could now give you halfe the Light that you *ſhall then have*, and *now* make you know at the *Heart* with the *feeling of Repentance*, that which

which you must else quickly know, even at the Heart with the *feeling of despaire*; sirs, I hope you think not that I speak meere fancies to you, or any think that is *questionable* and *uncertaine:* you can not say so without denying your selves to be Christians; no nor without contradicting the *light of Nature, and* debasing your soules below the Heathen who believe an *immortality of soules* in a different state of *Joy* or *misery* in the *Life to come:* And if you are once *below Heathens*, what are you better then *Brute beasts? Better* in your *naturall faculties* and *powers*, as being not made Bruites by your *Creatour*: But *worse* as to the *use* of them, and the *consequents* to *your selves*, because you are *voluntary self-abusing Brutes.* But to *live here* as a *Brut*, will not make you *die* and be *hereafter* as a Bruit: To *belive* you *shall die* as a *Beast*, *will* not prevent the *miserable life* of an impenitent sinner. It will not *make* your soules to *be Mortall*, to *believe* they *are mortall*; no more then it will make a *beast* to be *Immortall*, if he could but *think so.* The coffin-maker and the grave-maker, if they never read a Book, can tell you that it is no controversie whether you must *goe hence.* And *Faith* and *Reason* can both assure you, that

that your *ſoules* lie not downe with your Bodies in the duſt, nor are *annihilated* by the falling of your earthly tabernacle; no more then the *ſpirits when the glaſs* is broken that held them, or then your *Bodies* are *annihilated* when you put off your *clothes*, or riſe out of your beds: Or then the *bird* is *annihilated* that is got out of the *ſhell*: or the *infant* that is by nature caſt out of the *wombe*: nor no *more* then the *Angels* that appeared to the Apoſtles or others, were *annihilated* when they *diſappeared*: Or (if I muſt ſpeak more ſuitably to the ungodly) no more then the *Devil* that ſome time *appeareth* in a bodily ſhape is *annihilated* when that *appearance vaniſheth*. As I ſuppoſe there is never a perſon in all this populous city that was here but ſeven-ſcore years agoe; ſo I ſuppoſe there is none of you that are here to day, that expect to be here ſo long a time: They are gone before you into a world where there is no *preſumption* or *ſecurity*: and you are going after them and are almoſt there. As eaſily as you ſet here, I tell you all, *you are going after them apace, and are almoſt there:*

O Sirs, that *world* is a *world of Light.* To the damned ſoules it is called *Outer darkneſs*

darkneſs, becauſe they have none of the *Light of Glory* or of *Comfort*: But they ſhall have the *Light* of a *ſelf-accuſing, ſelf-tormenting Conſcience* that is gone out of the *darknes of ſelf-ignorance* and *ſelf-deceit*, and is fully cured of its *ſlumber* and *inſenſibility*.

Do you now take a *civilized perſon* for a *Saint*? you will not do ſo long.

Doth the *Baptiſme of water only* goe with you now for the *Regeneration of the Spirit*? It will not be ſo long: you will ſhortly be undeceived.

Doth a *ceremonious Phariſee* thank God for the *ſincerity* and *Holynes* which he never had? He will ſhortly be taught better to know the nature of *Holyneſs* and *ſincerity*, and that God Juſtifyeth not all that Juſtifie themſelves.

Doth a little *formal heartleſs, Hypocriticall devotion*, now cover a ſenſuall, worldly mind? The cover will be ſhortly taken off, and the nakednes and deformity of the Phariſee will appeare.

Doth the *name of a chriſtian*, and the *heartleſs uſe of outward ordinances*, and that *good eſteeme of others*, now goe for Godlyneſs and ſaving grace? The Autumne is at hand, when theſe leaves will all lie in the

the dirt, and will goe for fruit no longer.

Do you take it *now* for true Religion to be *hot* for *lust*, and *pride*, and *gain*, and cold for *God* and you *Salvation*? and to *obey God* so far as will stand with your *outward prosperity*, and as the *flesh*, or your *other Masters* will give leave? This is an Opinion that never accompanied any man *beyond the grave*.

Do you think to be saved by all that devotion, which gives God but the *leavings of the flesh and world*, and by a Religion that gives him but the *outer rooms* (when *pleasure* and *gain* are *next your hearts*) and that makes him but an underling to your *Covetousness* and *Ambition*? Think so if you can, when you are gone hence.

Cannot the Preacher *now* make the *ungodly* to *know that they are ungodly*, the *unsanctified* to know they *are but carnal*, and the *Pharisee* to know that his *Religion is Vain? Death* can convince the awakened soul of all this in a moment.

You can *choose* whether you will *believe us*: but *Death* will *so speak* as to be *believed*. You must be *Voluntary* in knowing your misery *now*: but then you shall know it against your wills. You must open the

windows

windows, or must open your *eyes*, if you will see your selves by the Light which *we* bring to you: But *Death* irresistibly throws open all. To say in pride and obstinacy, [*I will not believe it*] will *now* serve turn to quiet your consciences, and make you seem as safe as any: But when God saith *You shall feel it*, your *unbelief* is uneffectual: It can *then torment you*, but it can no longer *ease you*. There's then no room for [*I will not believe it.*] God can without a word perswade you of that which you were resolved you would never be perswaded of.

This day while you all sit here in the *body*, you are every one *affected* according as you *apprehend* your state to be, whether it *be indeed* as you apprehend it, or not: But when *Death* hath opened you the door into eternity, you will be all *affected* with your conditions as they *are indeed*.

To day, you are here *quiet* because you *think* your souls are safe: and some are *troubled* that *think* they are in a state of misery: and its like that some on *both sides* are *mistaken*: and the *quiet* of one, and the *disquiet* of another, may arise for want of the *knowledge of your selves*: But

Death will rectifie both theſe errors: and then if you are *unſanctified*, no *falſe opinions*, no *unbelief*, no *confident conceits* of your integreity, will abate your deſperation, or give any eaſe to your tormented minds: Nor will there be any doubts, or fears or deſpairing ſelf-afflicting thoughts to diſquiet thoſe that Chriſt hath juſtified, or abate their Joyes.

O how many thouſands will then think much otherwiſe of themſelves then they now do! *Death* turns you out of the *company of flatterers*; and calls you out of the *world of error*, where men *laugh* and *cry* in their *ſleep*: and bringeth you among *awakened ſouls*, where all things are called by their proper names, and all men are taken *by themſelves* to be as they *are indeed*. *Serious Religion* is not *there* a deriſion; nor *Loving* and *ſeeking* and *ſerving God with all the heart and ſoul and might*, is not there taken for *unneceſſary preciſeneſs*. *Holineſs* is not *there* called *humour* or *Hypocriſie*: Nor is the *Phariſaical Ceremonious Hypocrite*, taken for a man of the moſt *prudent*, *ſafe and moderate Religion*. God judgeth not as man, by outward appearances; but with righteous judgement: *that*

which

which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God, Luke 16. 15. And he will *make you* then to judge of *your selves* as *he hath judged you*. Though *Wisdom* now *be Justified but of her children*, it shall then be *Justified by all*: Not by a *sanctifying*, but a *constrained involuntary tormenting light*: And though *now* men can believe as well of themselves, as self-love and the quieting of their consciences doth require; yet then they will have lost this mastery over their own conceits.

O therefore beloved Hearers, seeing you are all going into an *unresistibly convincing Light*, and are almost in that world where *all must fully know themselves*: Seeing *nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be made known* (Mat. 10. 26.) and no unsanctified Hypocrite doth flatter himself into such high presumption, but a dying hour will take him down, and turn it all into endless desperation, if true Conversion prevent it not; I beseech you be *more conversant with Conscience*, then you have been: Be ashamed that a wanton sot, that knoweth nothing better then flesh to adorn and to be carefull of, should bestow more hours in looking into the *Glass*, then you bestow to look into *Gods*

Word and *your own Hearts*; yea more in *a year*, then you have *thus* beſtowed in all *your lives*.

O that you knew what a *profitable companion Conſcience is* for you to converſe with. You would not then think your ſelves ſo *ſolitary* as to be deſtitute of *company* and *employment*, while you have *ſo much* to do *at home*, and one in your *boſome* that you have *ſo much buſineſs* with.

And it is a *neceſſary* and *inſeparable* companion: If the wife of your *boſome* ſhould be a ſhrew, you muſt not therefore be a *ſtranger* to her, becauſe of *nearneſs*, *neceſſity* and *buſineſs*. If *Conſcience ſhould* give you ſome foul words, and *chide* you when you had rather be *flattered*; yet there is no *running from it* for more pleaſant company: Home is homely: Its there that you *muſt dwell*: *Conſcience* is *married* to you: *Pleaſe* it on *ſafe terms* as well as you can: but do not think to *overrun* it: For it *will follow* you; or you muſt *return to it* home again, when you have gone your *furtheſt*, and done you *worſt*. You have taken *Conſcience* for *better* and for *worſe*. There is no expectation of a *divorce*: no not by *Death*: It will follow

you

you to *Eternity*. And therefore O be not ſtrange to *Conſcience*, that will be your *Comforter* or *Tormenter* at the hour of *death*; that can do ſo much to make *ſickneſs* and all *ſuffering light* or *grievous*; and to make *death welcome* or *terrible* to you: Fly not from *conſcience* that muſt dwell with you for ever.

O fooliſh ſinners! do you want *company* and *buſineſs* to paſs away your *time?* Are you fain to go to *Cards* or *Dice* to waſte this *treaſure*, which is more precious then your *money?* Do you go to an *Ale-houſe*, a *Play-houſe*, or other ſuch *Peſthouſe* to ſeek for *company* and *paſtime:* (I ſay not, to *Bedlam*; for thats as much more honourable then your ſinfull ſociety, as the place that *cureth* or *reſtraineth* the mad, is better then that which *makes* them mad.) Do you forget what *company* and *buſineſs* you have at *home*. As you love your peace and happineſs, inſtead of converſing with vain, laſcivious, or ungodly perſons, O ſpend that time in converſe with your *Conſciences*. You may there have a thouſand times more profitable diſcourſe. Be not offended to give *Conſcience* a ſober faithfull anſwer, if it ask you, What you have done with all your *Time?* and how you have

lived in *the world*? and how you have *obeyed the calls of grace*? and how you have *entertained Christ* into your *hearts*? and whether you have *obeyed him* or his *enemy*? and whether you have been led by the *spirit* or the *flesh*? and what *forwardness* the *work* of your salvation is in, for which you came into the world? and what *assurance* you have of your Justification and Salvation? and what *readiness* to die? Think it not *presumption* in *Conscience* thus to *examine* you: Though you have perhaps unthankfully disdained to be thus *examined* by your *Pastors*, your *external Guides*, whose *office* it is to help you, and watch for your souls; yet do not disdain to be accountable to *your selves*. *Accountable* you *must be* ere long to *God*: And that friend that would help you to make ready such accounts, on which so great a weight dependeth, me thinks should be welcomed with a thousand thanks. *Ministers* and *Conscience* should be acceptable to you, that come on so necessary *a work*.

The *chidings* of *Conscience* are more friendly language then the *flattery* of your ignorant or proud associates: and should be more gratefull to you then the *laughter of fools*, which is like the *crackling of thorns*

thorns in the fire, (Eccles. 7. 6.) Thy *own home* though it be a *house of mourning*, is *better* for thee then such a sinfull *house of mirth.* Hear but what *Conscience* hath to *say to you.* No one will speak with you, that hath words to speak, which *nearlyer* concern you. I beseech you, Sirs, be more *frequent* and *familiar* with *Conscience* then most men are. Think not the *time lost*, when you walk and talk with *it alone. Confer* with it about your *endless state*, and where you are like to be *for ever*; and *what way* you are in; and *what thoughts* you will have of your *sins* and *duties*, of the *world* and *God*, of *yielding* or *overcoming* at the *last.* Is there no *sense* in this discourse? Thou art *dead* and *senseless* if thou *think* so. Is idle *talk* and *prating* better? I hope you are not so distracted as to say so. If you have not *blinded, deceived* or *bribed* it, I tell you, *Conscience* hath other kind of *discourse* for you; more *excellent* and *necessary* things to talk of, then *wantons*, or *worldlings*, or *pot-companions* have. Its better be giving *Conscience* an *account*, what *business* thou hast had so *often* in such company; and *how* thou wouldst have *lookt*, if *death had found thee there?* then without leave from from God or Conscience, to go thither *again.*

The thriving way is neither to be *ſtill at home,* nor *ſtill abroad*; but to be *at home* when *homework* is to be *done*; and to be *abroad* only for *doing* and for *getting good,* in a way of diligent Chriſtian trading; and, to bring that *home* that is *got abroad*: but *never* to *go abroad* upon *loytering, vain, expenſive* occaſions. When you have *done* with *Conſcience*, converſe with *others* that your buſineſs lieth with, and go *abroad* when its for your *Maſters work*: but go not upon idle errands: converſe not with prodigal Waſters of your time, and enemies to your ſouls.

One time or *other* Conſcience *will ſpeak*, and *have a hearing*: the *ſooner* the *better*: Put it not off to a time ſo *unſeaſonable* as *Death*; I ſay not *unſeaſonable* for *Conſcience* to *ſpeak in*; but *unſeaſonable* for it to *begin to ſpeak in*; and unſeaſonable for thoſe *terrible* words that need a *calmer* time for anſwer; and unſeaſonable for ſo *many things* and *ſo great*, as ſelf-betrayers uſe to put off untill then, which need a longer time for due conſideration and diſpatch.

3. And I beſeech you conſider, *with what amazing horror it muſt needs ſurpriſe you, to find on a ſudden and unexpectedly*

Stedly when you die, that all is Worse with you then you imagined or would believe? After a whole life of confident presumption, to be *suddenly* convinced by so dreadfull an experience, of your so long and wilfull a mistake! To find in a *moment*, that you have flattered your souls, into so desperate a state of woe! To *see* and *feel* all the selfish cavils and reasonings confuted, in *one hour*, which the wisest and holiest men on earth, could never beat you from *before!* O Sirs, you know not now, what a *day*, what a *conviction*, that will be! *You know not what it is* for a *guilty soul* to to pass out of the *Body*, and find it self in the plague of an unsanctified state, and hated of the Holy God, that *never would know it* till it was too late. You know not *What it is* to be turned by *Death* into that *world of spirits*, where all *self-deceit* is detected by *experience*: and all must undergo a righteous judgement; where *blindness* and *self-love* can no more perswade the *miserable* that they are *happy*; the *unholy* that they are *sanctified*; the *fleshly minded* men that they are *spiritual*; the *lovers of the world*, that they are the *Lovers of God*: Men *cannot* there *believe what they list*: nor take that for a *truth* which makes for

for their *security*, be it never so false; Men *cannot* there *believe* that they are *accepted of God*, while they are in the *bonds of their iniquity*; or that their *hearts* are as *good as the best*, while their *tongues* and *lives* are *opposite to goodness*; or that they shall be *saved* as soon as the *godly*, though they be *ungodly*.

Its easie for a man to *hear* of *waves*, and *gulfs* and *shipwrack* that never *saw the Sea*; and without any *fear* to *hear* of *battels*, that never *saw* the face of an *enemy*: and without any *trouble* to *hear* of *sickness* and *tormenting pains*, and *burning*, and *cutting off* of limbs, that never *felt* or *saw* such things. Its easie for you *here* in these *seats*, in the midst of *health* and *peace* and *quietness*, to *hear* of a *departing soul*, and *where* it shall *appear*, and what it shall there *see*, and how great a discovery *Death* will make: But O Sirs, when this must be *your case* (as you know it must be, alas, how speedily!) these matters then will seem *considerable*: They will be *new* and *strange* to those that have heard of them an *hundred times*, because they never heard of them *sensibly* till *now*. One of those souls that have been here before you, and have past that way into eternity, have *other thoughts* of

of these things than *you* have! O how do *they think now*, of the fearless slumber and stupidity of those that they have left behind? What think they now of those that wilfully fly the light, and flatter themselves in guilt and misery, and make light of all the Joyes and torments of the other world? Even as the *damned Rich man* in *Luke* 16. thought of his poor *Brethren*, that remained in prosperity and presumtion upon earth, and little thought what *company he* was in, what a *sight he* saw, and what *he* did *endure!*

Poor careless souls, you *know not now what it is*, for the *ungodly* to *see* that they are *ungodly*, by the unresistible light of another world: and for the *unholy* to *feel* in Hell that they are *unholy*, and to be taught by flames and the wrath of the Almighty, what is the difference between the *sanctified* and the *carnal*, betwen an *obedient* and a *rebellious* life: While you *sit here*, you *little know* these things: You *see* them not: you *feel* them not: and the Lord grant you may never so know them by wofull experience: that you may scape *such a knowledge*, is the end of all that I am saying to you: But *that will not*

be

be, but by *another kind of knowledge*, even the *knowledge of Belief* and *serious Consideration*.

For your souls sake therefore *come into the Light*, and *try your selves*, and huddle not over a work of such unspeakable consequence, as the searching of your hearts and judging of your spiritual state? O be *glad* to *know* what you *are indeed!* Put home the question, *Am I sanctified or not? Am I in the Spirit or in the flesh?* Be *glad* of any *help* for the sure resolution of such doubts. Take not up with *sleight* and *venturous presumptions*. It is your *own case*: your *nearest* and your *greatest case*: All lies upon it: *Who* should be so willing of the *plainest* dealing, the *speediest* and the *closest* search as *you*? O be not *surprized* by an *unexpected sight* of an *unrenewed miserable* soul at death. It it *be so*, see it *now*, while *seeing it* may do *good*: If it *be not so*, a faithfull search can do you no harm, but comfort you by the discovery of your sincerity. Say not too late, I *thought* I had been born again of the Spirit, and had been in a state of grace? I *thought* I had been a child of God, and reconciled to him and Justified by faith! O what a heart-tearing word would it be

to

to you, when time is past, to say, *I thought it had been better with me!*

4. Consider also, that *It is one of Satans principal designs for your damnation, to keep you ignorant of your selves.* He knows if he can but make you believe, that you *are Regenerate* when you *are not*, you will never *seek* to be *regenerate*: And that if he can make you think that you are *Godly*, when you *are ungodly*, and have *the spirit of Christ* while you *are servants to the flesh*, he may defeat all the labours of your Teachers, and let them call on you to be *Converted* till their hearts ake, to no purpose, but leave you as you are: He knows how *light* you'l set by the *Physician*, if he can but make you *believe* that *you are well!* and how little *care* you'l take for a *pardon*, if you think that you *need it not*, or have *one already*. In vain may we call on you till we are hoarse to *Turn*, and become New creatures, and give up your selves to Christ, if you think that you are good Christians, and are in the way to Heaven already.

And when you know before hand, that *here* lieth the principal *game* of the *Deceiver*, and that it will be his chief contrivance,

vance, to keep you unacquainted with your sin and danger, till you are past recovery, one would think there should be no need to bid you be *diligent to know your selves.*

5. And I beseech you consider also, that *Without this design there is no likelyhood that Satan could undo you*: If he keep you not *Ignorant of your selves*, he is never like to keep you in *his power*: You come out of *his Kingdom* when you come out of *darkness.* He knoweth that if *once* you did but see how near you stand to the brink of Hell, you would think it time to change your standing.

There is a double *principle* in *Nature*, that would do *something* towards your *Repentance* and *recovery*, if your eyes were opened to *see where you are.*

1. There is since the seduction and ruine of man, by Satans temptations, an *Enmity* put into the *whole Nature of man* against the *Whole Satanical Serpentine Nature*: so that this *Natural enmity* would so much conduce to your deliverance, as that you would not be contented with your *Relation*, if you knew that you are the *drudges* of the *Devil*; nor would you be charmed into

into sin so easily, if you *knew* that it is *he indeed* that doth invite you; nor would you dance after his pipe; or take his bait, if you *perceived indeed* that it is *his:* no language would be so taking with you, which you *knew* were uttered by *his voice.* It would do much to affright you from his service, if you *knew* that it is *he indeed* that setteth you on work, and is gratified by it. He keepeth men in his *bondage* by making them believe that they are *free*: He perswadeth men to obey *him*, by perswading them that it is *God* that they obey: And he draweth them to *Hell*, by making them believe that they are following Christ to *Heaven*; or at least, that they are following the inclination of their nature in a pardonable infirmity.

2. And the Natural principle of *self-love* would in order to *self-preservation* do much to drive you from your sinfull state, if you did but *know* what a *state it is.* There is no man so far *hateth himself* as to be *willing* to be *damned.* You *cannot choose* an habitation in Hell: Such a place *can never* be *desired.* Sure he that *cannot choose* but fly from an *enemy*, or a *bear* that did pursue him, or fly from fire or *water* or *pestilence*

peſtilence when he perceives his danger, would fly from *Hell*, if he perceived his danger.

I beſeech you all that are ſecure in an unſanctified ſtate, do but look inwards, and help me in preaching this doctrine to your hearts, and tell your ſelves, whether you do *not think*; that your *ſtate is good*, and that you are the children of God as well as others; and that though you are ſinners, yet your ſins are pardoned by the blood of Chriſt, and that you ſhall be ſaved if you die in the ſtate that you are in? And are not *theſe thoughts* the *Reaſon* why you venture to continue in your *preſent ſtate*, and look not after ſo great a change as Scripture ſpeaketh of as neceſſary?

And I pray you deal plainly with your hearts, and tell me, you careleſs ſinners, young or old, that ſit here as quietly as if all were well with you; If you did but *know* that you are at *this hour unregenerate*, and that *without Regeneration* there is is no *Salvation*; If you did but *know* that you are yet *carnal* and *unholy*, and that *without Holineſs none ſhall ſee God*; If you did but *know* that you are yet in a ſtate

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of *Enmity* to *God* while you call him *Father*, and of *Enmity* to *Christ* while you call him your *Saviour*, and of *Enmity* to the *Holy Spirit* while you call him your *sanctifyer*; If you did but *know* that your *sins* are *unpardoned*, and your *souls unjustified*, and that you are *condemned already*, and shall *certainly be damned* if you *die as you are*, *could* you *live quietly* in such a state? *Could you* sleep, and eat and drink *quietly*, and follow your trades, and let time run on, without *repenting* and *returning* unto God, if you *knew* that you are *past hope*, if death surprize you in this condition? For the Lords sake Sirs, rouze up your selves a little, and be serious in a business that concerneth you more then ten thousand natural lives, and tell me, or rather tell *your selves*, If you did but *know* that while you sit here, you are *unrenewed*, and therefore under the *curse* of *God*, and in the *bondage* of the *Devil*, and are hasting towards perdition, and are *gone for ever*, if you be not sanctified and made new creatures before you die; *could you* then put off *this Sermon* with a sleepy careless hearing, and go home and talk of common matters, and no more mind it, as you have done by Sermons untill now? *Could*

you forbear going alone and there bethinking your ſelves, *O what a ſinful, dreadfull condition are we in! What will become of us if we be not regenerate before we die! Had we no Underſtandings? no Hearts? no life or ſenſe? that we have lingered ſo long, and lived ſo careleſly in ſuch a ſtate? O where had we been now if we had died unregenerate! How near have we been oft to Death? how many ſickneſſes might have put an end to life and hope? Had any of them cut off the ſlender thread that our lives have hanged on ſo long, and had we died before this day, we had been new in Hell without remedy.* Could any of you that *knew* this to be *your caſe,* forbear to betake your ſelves to God, and cry to him in the bitterneſs of your ſouls, [*O Lord, what Rebells, what wretches have we been? We have ſinned againſt Heaven and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy children! O how ſin hath captivated our underſtandings, and conquered our very ſenſe, and made us live like men that were dead as to the Love and ſervice of God, and the work of our ſalvation, which we were created and redeemed for! O Lord have mercy upon theſe blinded ſenſeleſs miſerable ſouls! Have mercy upon theſe deſpiſers and abuſers of thy mer-*

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cy! O save us or we perish! Save us from our sins, from Satan, from thy curse and wrath! Save, us or we are undone and lost for ever! Save us from the unquenchable fire, from the worm that never dieth! from the bottomless pit, the outer darkness, the horrid gulf of endless misery! O let the bowels of thy compassion yearn over us; O save us for thy Mercy sake; Shut not out the cries of miserable sinners. Regenerate, renew and sanctifie our hearts; O make us new creatures! O plant thine Image on our souls, and incline them towards thee, that they may be wholly thine; O make us such as thou commandest us to be; Away with our sins, and sinfull pleasures, and sinfull company! We have had too much, too much of them already! Let us now be thine, associated with them that Love and fear thee; imployed in the works of Holiness and obedience all our dayes! Lord, we are willing to let go our sins, and to be thy servants: or if we be not, make us willing.]

What say you Sirs, if you *knew* that you were *this hour* in a state of condemnation, *could you forbear* making haste with such confessions, complaints and earnest supplications to God?

And could you *forbear* going presently

ly to ſome *faithfull Miniſter* or *godly friend*, and telling him your caſe and danger, and begging his advice, and prayers, and asking him, what a poor ſinner muſt do to be recovered, pardoned and ſaved, that is ſo deep in ſin and miſery, and hath deſpiſed Chriſt and grace ſo long? Could you tell how to ſleep quietly many nights more, before you had earneſtly ſought out for help, and made this change? How could you chooſe but preſently betake your ſelves to the company, and converſe, and examples of the godly that are within your reach! (For when ever a man is *truly changed*, his *friendſhip*, and *company* is *changed*, if he have opportunity.) And how could you *chooſe* but go and take your leave of your old *companions*, and with tears and ſorrow tell them how fooliſhly and ſinfully you have done, and what wrong you have done each others ſouls, and intreat them to repent and do ſo no more, or elſe you will renounce them, and fly from their company as from a Peſthouſe?

Can a man *forbear* thus to fly from *Hell*, if he *ſaw* that he is as *near* it as a condemned Traytor to the Gallows? He that will *beg for bread*, if he be *hungry*, and rather lay by ſhame, then famiſh, would *beg for grace*

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if he *saw* and *felt* how much he *needeth* it: (And *seeing* it, is the way to *feel* it) He that will *seek* for *medicines* when he is *sick*, and would do almost *any thing* to escape a temporal *death*, would he not seek out to Christ the remedy of his soul, if he *knew* and *felt*, that otherwise there is no recovery; and would he not do much against eternal death? *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath, he will give for his life*;] was a truth that the Devil knew and maketh use of in his temptations. And will a man then be *regardless* of his *soul*, that *knows* he hath an *immortal soul?* and of *life eternal*, that *knows* his danger of *eternal death?*

O Sirs, it is *not possible*, but the *true knowledge* of your state of sin and danger would do very much to save you from it. For it is a *wilfull-chosen* state. All the Devils in Hell cannot bring you to it, and continue you in it *against your will*. You are willing of the sin, though unwilling of the punishment: And if you truly knew the *punishment* and *your danger* of it, you would be the more unwilling of the *sin*: for God hath affixed *punishment* to *sin* for *this end*, that they that else would *love* the *Serpent*, may *hate* it for the *sting*: Will you not say, He is a *beast* and *not a man*

that will avoid no danger but what he *ſeeth*? *Foreſeeing* is to a man, what *ſeeing* is to a *beaſt*: If he *ſee* it before his eyes, a *beaſt* will not eaſily be driven into a Cole-pit or a gulf: he will draw back and ſtrive if you go about to kill him. And is he a *man*, or ſome monſter that wants a name, that will go on to Hell, when he *ſeeth it* as it were before him? and that will continue in a ſtate of ſin, when he *knows* he muſt be damned in Hell for ever, if he ſo continue to the end? Indeed ſin is the *deformity* and *monſtroſity* of the ſoul. He is a monſter of *Blindneſs* that *ſeeth* not the folly and peril of ſuch a ſtate, and that a ſtate of *Holineſs* is *better*: He is a monſter of *ſtupidity* that finds himſelf in ſuch a ſtate, and doth not *feel it*, but maketh light of it; And he is monſter of *ſlothfulneſs* that will not *ſtir* when he finds himſelf in ſuch a caſe, and ſeek for mercy, and value the remedy, and uſe the means, and forſake his ſinfull courſe and company, till further mercy take him up and bring him home, and make him welcome, as one that *was loſt* but now *is found*, *was dead but is alive*.

I do not doubt for all theſe expoſtulations, but ſome men may be ſuch monſters,

sters, as thus to see that they are in a state of wrath and misery, and yet continue in it.

As 1. Such as have but a *glimmering insufficient sight of it*, and *a half-belief*, while a greater *belief* and *hope* of the contrary, (that is, *Presumption*) is predominant at the heart: But these are rather to be called men *ignorant* of their *misery* then men that *know it*; and men that *believe it not*, then *men that do believe it*, as long as the *Ignorance* and *Presumption* is the *prevailing* part.

2. Such as by the *rage of appetite* and *passion* are hurried into deadly sin, and so continue, when ever the tempter offereth them the bait, against their Conscience, and some apprehension of their misery. But these have commonly a prevalent *self-flattery* secretly within encouraging and upholding them in their sin, and telling them that the reluctancies of their consciences are the spirits strivings against the flesh, and their fits of remorse are true repentance; and though they are *sinners*, they hope they are *pardoned*, and shall be *saved*, so that *these* do *not know* themselves *indeed*.

3. Such as by their *deep engagements to*

the world, and *love of its proſperity*, and a *cuſtom in ſinning*, are ſo hardened, and caſt into a ſlumber, that though they have a ſecret knowledge or ſuſpicion that their caſe is miſerable, yet they are not wakened to the due *conſideration* and *feeling* of it: and therefore they go on as if they knew it not: But theſe have not their knowledge in *exerciſe*: It is but a candle in a dark lanthorn, that now and then gives them a *convincing flaſh*, when the right ſide happens to be towards them, or like *lightning* that rather *frightens* and *amazeth* them then *directeth* them. And (as I ſaid of the former) as to the act, their *ſelf-ignorance* is the predominant part, and therefore they cannot be ſaid indeed to *know themſelves*. Now and then a convinced apprehenſion, or a fear, is not the tenor of their minds.

4. Such as being in youth or health do *promiſe themſelves long life*, or any others that fooliſhly put away the day of *death*, and think they have yet time enough before them; and therefore though they are convinced of their miſery, and know they muſt be *Converted* or *Condemned*, do yet *delay*, and quiet themſelves with *purpoſes to Repent hereafter*, when Death drawes

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neer and there is no other remedie, but they must leave their sins, or give up all their hopes of Heaven. Though these *know somewhat* of their *present misery*, it is but by such a *flashy uneffectuall* knowledge, as is afore described: and they know little of the *wickednes's* of their hearts while they confes's them wicked. Otherwise they could not imagine that *Repentance* is so *easie* a work to *such as they*, as that they can performe it when their hearts are further hardened, and that so easily and certainly as that their salvation may be ventured on it by delayes. Did they *know themselves*, they would know the *backwardnes's* of their *hearts*, and manifold *difficulties* should make them see the madnes's of *delayes* and of longer resisting and abusing the grace of the spirit that *must convert* them if ever they be saved.

5. Such as have *light to shew them their misery*, but live where they heare not the discovery of the *Remedie*, and are left without any knowledge of a Saviour. I deny not but *such* may go on in a state of misery though they know it, when they know no way out of it.

6. Such as *Believe not the Remedie* though they *heare* of it, but think that Christ is not

not to be believed in as the *Saviour* of the world.

7. Such as *Believe* that Christ is the Redeemer, but *believe not* that he *will have mercy upon them*, as supposing their *hearts* are *not qualified* for his salvation, nor *ever will be*, because the day of grace is past, and he hath *concluded* them under a sentence of reprobation; and therefore thinking that there is *no hope* and that their endeavours would be all in vaine, they *cast off* all endeavours, and give up themselves to the *pleasurs* of *the flesh*, and say, It *is as good be damned for some thing or for a greater mattter*, as *for a lesse*.

So that there are *three sorts of Despaire* that are not equally dangerous 1. *A Despaire* of pardon and salvation arising from *Infidelity*, as if the *Gospell were not true*, nor *Christ a Saviour to be trusted* with our soules, if predominant, is damnable. 2. A *Despaire* of pardon and salvation, arising from a *mis-understanding* of the *Promise*, as if it pardoned not such sins as ours, and denyed mercy to those that have sinned so long as we; this is not damnable necessarily of it selfe, because it implyeth *faith in Christ*; and not *Infidelity*, but *misunderstanding* hindereth the *apply-*

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ing comforting act: And therefore this *actuall personal despaire*, is accompanyed with a *General actual Hope* and with a *particular personal, vertual Hope.* 3. A *Despaire* of pardon and salvation, upon the *misunderstanding* of *ourselves*, as thinking both that we *are graceless*, and *alwaies shall be so*, because of the blindnes and hardnes of our hearts: of this *Despaire* I say as of the former, it is *joyned* with *faith* and with *General* and *Virtual Hope:* and therefore is not *the Despaire* that of *its self condemneth.* Many may be saved that are too much guitly of it.

But if either of these two later sorts shall so far prevaile as to turne men off from a *Holy to* a *fleshly worldly interest* and *life*, and make them say, [*Wee will take our pleasure while we may, and will have somthing for our soules before we lose them*] and *do accordingly*; *this kind* of *Desperation* is damnable by the *effects*, because it takes men off the *meanes of life*, and giveth them up to *damning sinnes.*

Thus I have shewed you of *seven* sorts of persons, that may *know themselves*, *their sin* and *danger*, with such an uneffectuall partiall knowledge a I have described, and yet continue in that sin and misery.

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And in two caſes even *ſound Believers* many poſſibly go on to *ſin*, when they *ſee the ſin*: and not only *ſee the danger* of it, but deſpairingly thinke it *greater then* it is: As 1. in caſe of common *unavoidable failings*, *infirmites*, and *low degrees* of grace: we are *all imperfect*: and yet we all know that it is our *duty to be perfect* (as *perfection* is oppoſed to *ſinfull*, and not to *innocent imperfection*) And yet *this knowledge maketh us* not perfect. We *know* we *ſhould* be more humbled, and more believing, and more watchfull, and Love God more, and feare and truſt him more, and be more fruitfull, and diligent, and obedient and zealous: and yet we *are not* What we *know* we ſhould be in any of theſe. In theſe we *all live* in *ſin againſt knowledge*: els we ſhould be *all* as good as we *know* we ought to be, which no man is. And if through temptation any of us ſhould be ready to deſpaire becauſe of any of theſe infirmityes, becauſe we cannot Repent, or Love God, watch, or Pray, or Obey more perfectly, or as we ſhould, yet *Grace* ceaſeth not to be *Grace*, though in the *leaſt degree*, becauſe we are *ready to deſpair* for want of *more*. Nor will the *ſincerity* of this *ſpark*, or *graine of Muſtard ſeed*, be unſucceſſull as

as to our salvation, because we *think so*, and *take ourselves* to be *unsincere*, and our sanctification to be *none*; Nor yet because we cannot be as obedient and good as we know we should be. For the Gospell saith not [*He that knoweth he hath faith or sincerity, shall be saved: and he that knoweth it not, shall be damned:* or *he that is lesse holy or obedient then his conscence tells him he should be, shall be damned*] But *he that Believeth and Repenteth, shall be saved*, whether he *know* it to be done in sincerity or no: and *he that doth not, shall be damned*, though he never so confidently *think* he doth. So that in the *Degrees* of Holynes and obedience, all Christians ordinarly *sin against knowledge*.

2. And besides what is *ordinary*, some *extraordinarily* in the time of a Powerfull temptation go further then ordinarily they do. And some under dull Flegmatick melancholy, or cholerick diseases or distempers of body, or under a diseased violent appetite, may transgress more against their knowledge, then otherwise they would do: when the spirits are flatted, the thoughts confused, the reason weakened, the passion strengthned, and the executive faculties undisposed, so that their actions

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are but imperfectly *Humane* or *Morall*; (imperfectly capable of vertue or vice, good or evill) it is no wonder here if poor ſoules not only perceive their ſin, but think it and the danger to be tenfold greater then they are, and yet go on againſt their knowledge, and yet have true grace.

This much I have ſaid both to ſtay you from *miſunderſtanding* what I ſaid before, concerning the Power of conviction to converſion (for few Auditoryes want hearers that will be ſtill *excepting*, if *Caution* ſtop not every hole) and alſo to help you to the *fuller underſtanding* of the *matter its ſelf* of which I treat. But *exceptio firmat regulam in non exceptis*, Exceptions ſtrengthen and not weaken any Rule or propoſition, in the points not excepted. Still I ſay that out of theſe caſes the true knowledge of a ſinfull miſerable ſtate, is ſo great a helpe to bring us out of it, that its hardly imaginable how rationall men can willfully continue in a ſtate of ſuch exceeding danger, if they be but well acquainted that they are in it. I know a Hardned heart hath an unreaſonable obſtinate oppoſition againſt the meanes of its own recovery: But yet men have ſome uſe of

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Reason and self preserving Love and *care*, or they are not *men* (and if they be not *men*, they cannot be *sinfull men*) And though *little transient lightnings* oft come to nothing, but leave some men in *greater darkness*; yet could we but set up a *standing Light* in all your consciences, could we *fully convince* and *resolve* the unregenerate that they cannot be saved in the carnall state and way that they are in, but must be sanctifyed or never saved, what hopes should we have that all the subtiltyes and snares of Satan, and all the pleasures and gaine of sin, and all the allurements of ungodly company could no longer hinder you from falling down at the feet of mercy, and begging forgiveness through the blood of Christ, and giving up yourselves in Covenant to the Lord, and speedily and resolutely betaking yourselves to an holy life! Could I but make you *throughly known unto your selves*, I should hope that all the unsanctified that hear me, would date their Conversion from this very day; and that you would not delay till the next morning, to bewail your sin and misery, and fly to Christ, lest you should die and be past hope this night.

And doth so much of *our work* and of

of *your recovery* lie upon *this* point; and yet ſhall we not be able to accompliſh it? Might you be brought into the way to Heaven, if we could but perſwade you that you are yet *out of the way*, and will you be undone, becauſe you will not *ſuffer* ſo *ſmall* and *reaſonable* a part of the *cure* as this is? O God forbid! O that we knew how to illuminate your minds ſo far as to make you find that you *are loſt!* How ready would Chriſt be then to *find you*, and to *receive* and *welcome* you, upon your return! Here is the *firſt* difficulty, which if we could but overcome, we ſhould hope to conquer *all the reſt*. Had we but a wedge to cleave *this* knot, the reſt would the more eaſily be done. Could we draw but this one pin of *ſelf-deceit*, the frame of Satans building were like to tumble down. O that any of you that know the nature of ſelf-deceit, and know the acceſſes to the inwards of a ſinner, and know the fallacious reaſonings of the heart, could *tell us* but how we might undeceive them! O that any of you that know the nature of humane underſtanding, with its ſeveral maladies and their cure, and know the power of ſaving truth, could *tell us what key* will undo this lock!

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what medicine will cure this diſeaſe, of wilfull, obſtinate, ſelf-deceiving? Think but on the caſe of our poor *people*, and of *ours*, and ſure you cannot chooſe but pitty both them and us. We are all profeſſors of the Chriſtian faith, and all ſay we believe the word of God: This word aſſureth us that all men are fallen in *Adam*, and are by *nature children of wrath*, and increaſe in ſin and miſery, till ſupernatural grace recover them. It tells us that the Redeemer is become by *office*, the *Phyſition* or *Saviour* of ſouls, waſhing away *their guilt* by *his blood*, and renewing and cleanſing their *corrupted natures* by his *Spirit*: It tell us that he will *freely* work the *cure*, for all that will take him for their Phyſicion, and will *forgive* and *ſave* them, that *penitently fly to him*, and *value*, and *accept*, and *truſt upon* his *grace*: And that, *except* they be thus made *new creatures*, all the world cannot ſave them from everlaſting wrath. This is the Doctrine that we all believe, or *ſay* we do believe: Thus doth it open the caſe of ſinners. *We* come now, according to our office, and the truſt repoſed in us, and we tell our Hearers what the Scripture ſaith of man, and what it commandeth us to tell

them: We tell them of their *fall*, their *sin* and *misery*; of the *Redeemer*, and the *sure* and *free salvation*, which they may *have* if they will but *come to him*. But, alas, we cannot make them believe that *they* are so *sick* as to have so *much need* of the *Physician*: and that *they* are *dead*, and have need of a *new creation*, as to the *inclinations* of their hearts, and the *end* and *bent* and *business* of their lives. We are sent to tender them the *mercy* of Christ, but we cannot make them believe that they are *miserable*. We are sent to offer them the *riches*, and *eye salve*, and *white rayment* of the Gospel: but we cannot make them know that they are *poor*, and *blind*, and *naked*: We are sent to call *them to Repent* and *Turn* that they may be *saved*; and we cannot make them know that they are so far out of the way as to *need* a *change* of *heart* and *life*. Here they sit before us, and we *look on them* with *pitty*, and know not how to *help* them. We *look on them* and *think*, alas, poor souls, you little see what death will quickly make you see. You will then see that there is no salvation, by all the blood and merits of Christ for any but the sanctified; but O that we could *now* but make you understand it. We look on them with com-

compassion, and think, Alas, poor souls, as easily and quietly as you sit here, a change is neer. It will be thus with you but a little while, and where will you be next? We know as sure as the word of God is true, that they must be converted and sanctified, or be lost for ever: and we cannot make them believe, but that the work is done already. The Lord knoweth, and our consciences witness to our shame, that we be not half so sensible of their misery, nor so compassionate towards them as we ought to be: but yet sometimes our hearts melt over them, and fain we would save them from the *wrath to come*; and we should have great hopes of the success, if we could but make them *know their danger*: It melts our hearts to look on them and think that they are so *near damnation*, and never like to *scape it*, till they *know it*, till they *know* that their *corruption* is so *great*, that nothing but the *quickning spirit* can recover them, and nothing less then to *become new creatures* will serve the turn: But if we would never so fain we *cannot* make them *know it*: O that we knew how to acquaint them with their case? O that we knew how to get within them, and to open the windows, that

the light of Chriſt might ſhew them their condition! But when we have done all, we find it paſt our power. We *know* they will be *paſt help in Hell*, if they *die* before they are *regenerate*: And could we but get *themſelves* to *know* it, we could not but hope that they would better look about them, and be ſaved: but we are *not able*: its more then we can do: We cannot get the groſſeſt worldling, the baſeſt ſenſualiſt, the filthieſt letcher, the proudeſt child of the Spirit of pride, to know that he is *in a ſtate of condemnation*, and *muſt be ſanctified or be damned*: much leſs can we procure the *formal Phariſee*, thus to *know himſelf*. We can eaſily get them to confeſs that they are *ſinners*, and *deſerve* damnation, and cannot be ſaved without *Chriſt*: But this will not ſerve: The beſt Saint on earth muſt ſay as much as this comes to. There are *converted* and *unconverted ſinners*: *ſanctifyed* and *unſanctified ſinners*: *Pardoned* and *unpardoned ſinners*: *Sinners* that are members of Chriſt, and the children of God, and heirs of Heaven; and *ſinners* that are *not ſo*, but *contrary*. They muſt know not only that they are *ſinners*, but that they are *yet unconverted*, *unſanctified*, *unpardoned ſinners*: not only that they cannot be ſa-

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ved without *Christ*; but that yet they *have no special interest in Christ*: They will not *Turn*, while they think they are *turned already*: They will not so value and seek for Conversion, and Remission, and Adoption, as to *obtain* them, while they think they *have them* all *already*. They *will not come to Christ that they may have life*, while they think they have part in Christ *already*. *Paul after* his Conversion was a *sinner*, and had *need of Christ*: but *Paul before* his Conversion was an *unsanctified, unjustified sinner*, and had *no part in Christ*: *This* is the state of sin and misery that you must *come out of*, or you are *lost*: And how can you be *brought out of it*, till you know that you are *in it*?

O therefore that we knew how to make you *know it*! How should we make poor sinners see that they are within a few steps of everlasting fire, that we might procure them to *run away* from it, and be *saved*! we cry so oft, and lose our labour, and leave so many in their security and self-deceits, that we are too discouraged, and remit our desires, and lose our compassion, and our selves alas grow dull and too insensible of their case, and preach too oft as coldly as if we could be content to let

them periſh. We are too apt to grow weary of holding the light to men aſleep, or that ſhut their eyes and will not ſee by it. When all that we have ſaid is not regarded, and we know not what more to ſay then hath been ſaid ſo long in vain, this flats our ſpirits; this makes ſo many of us *preach* almoſt as *careleſly* as we are *heard*. Regardleſs ſleepy hearers, make regardleſs ſleepy Preachers. Frequent fruſtration abateth hope: And the *fervour* and *diligence* of *proſecution* ceaſeth, as *hope* abateth. This is our fault: *Your* inſenſibility is no good excuſe for *ours*: But its a fault not eaſily avoided.

And when we are ſtopt at the *firſt door*, and cannot conquer Satans *out-works*, what hopes have we of going further? If all that we can ſay, will not convince you that you are yet unſanctified and unjuſtified, how ſhall we get you to the duties that belong to ſuch, in order to the attainment of this deſireable ſtate?

And

AND here I think *it not unseasonable to inform* you of the reason why the most able faithfull Ministers of Christ do *search so deep*, and *speak so hardly* of the case of unrenewed souls, as much displeaseth many of their hearers, and makes them say, they *are too severe and terrible preachers:* The *zealous Antinomian* saith, *they are Legalists*; and the *prophane Antimonian* saith, *they rail, and preach not mercy, but judgement only, and would drive men to despair, and make them mad.* But will they tell *God* he is a *Legalist* for making the *Law*, even *the Gospel Law* as well as the Law of Nature, and commanding us to preach it to the world? Shall they escape the *Sentence* by reproaching the *Law-maker*? Will not God judge the world? and judge them by a Law? and will he not be just and beyond the reach of their reproach? O sinner, this is not the smallest part of thy *terror*, that it is the *Gospel* that speaks this terror to thee, and excludes thee from salvation unless thou be *made new:* It is *mercy it self* that thus *condemneth* thee, and judgeth thee to *endless misery.* You are mistaken Sirs, when you say *we preach not Mercy*, and say

we *preach not the Goſpel*, but *the Law* : It is the *Goſpel* that ſaith, *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!* and that *if any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, the ſame is none of his*, John 3. 3, 5. Rom. 8. 9. The *ſame Goſpel* that ſaith, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*, ſaith alſo, that *He that believeth not ſhall be damned*, Mark 16. 16. Will you tell *Chriſt*, the *Saviour of the world*, that *he* is *not merciſull*, becauſe he talks to you of *Damnation*? *Mercy* it ſelf when it tells you that *There is no condemnation*, doth limit this pardon to them *that are in Chriſt Jeſus; who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit*,] Rom. 8. 1. It is *ſanctifying Mercy* that muſt *ſave* you, if ever you be *ſaved*, as well as *Juſtifying Mercy*. And will you refuſe *this Mercy*, and by no entreaty yield to *have it*, and yet think to be *ſaved* by it? What ſaved by *that Mercy* which you *will not have*? And will you ſay, *We preach not Mercy*, becauſe we tell you, that *Mercy will not ſave you, if you continue to reject it*? To be ſaved by *Mercy* without *Sanctification*, is to be *ſaved* and *not ſaved*: to be ſaved by *Mercy without Mercy* : Your words have *no better* ſenſe then this : And are thoſe afraid leſt Preachers ſhould make

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them *mad* by shewing them their *need of mercy*, that are *no Wiser* then to cast away their souls upon such senseless self-contradicting conceits as *these*?

I beseech you tell us *whose words* are they think you that say, *Without holiness none shall see God!* Heb. 12. 14. and that *He that is in Christ, is a new Creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. and such like passages which offend you; Are they *ours*, or are they *Gods*? Did *we* indite the Holy Scriptures, or did *the Holy Ghost*? Is it long of *us*, if there be any words there that cross your flesh, and that you call *bitter*? Can *we* help it, if God *will save none* but *sanctified believers*? If you have any thing to say against it, you must say it to *him*: We *are* sure that *this is in his word*: and we are sure *he cannot lye*: and therefore we are sure *its true*: We are sure that he *may do with his own as he list*, and that he *oweth you nothing*, and that he may give his pardon and salvation *to whom*, and *upon what terms* he please: And therefore *we are sure* he doth you no wrong. But if *you* think otherwise, reproach not *us* that are but *messengers*: but prepare your charge, and make it good against *your maker*, if you *dare* and *can*: you shall shortly come before him, and be put to it to justifie your selves: If you

If you can do it by recrimination, and can prevent your condemnation, by condemning the *Law* and the *Judge*, try your ſtrength and do your worſt.

Ah poor worms! dare you lift up the head, and move a tongue, againſt the Lord! Did *Infinite Wiſdom* it ſelf *want Wiſdom*, to make a Law to rule the world? And did *Infinite Goodneſs* want *Goodneſs* to deal mercifully, and as was beſt, with man! And ſhall *Juſtice* it ſelf be *judged* to be *unjuſt*? And that by *you*! By ſuch ſilly, ignorant, naughty and unrighteous ones *as you*! As if *you* had the *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, which you think *God wanted* when he made his Laws!

And whereas you tell us of *preaching terribly to you*, we *cannot help it*, if the true and righteous Threatnings of God be *terrible* to the *guilty*: It is becauſe *we know the Terrors of the Lord*, that we preach them, to *warn* you to prevent them. And ſo did the Apoſtles before us, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. Either *its true* that the *unquenchable fire* will be the portion of *impenitent*, *unbelieving*, *fleſhly*, *worldly*, *unſanctified men*, or it *is not true*: If it were *not true*, the *word of God* were not true: and then what ſhould you do with *any preaching* at all, or *any religion*!

en! But if you confess it to be *true*, do you think in reason, it should be *silenced?* or can we *tell* men of so *terrible* a thing as *Hell*, and tell them that it will certainly be *their lot*, unless they be *new creatures*, and not *speak terribly* to them! O Sirs, it is the wonder of my soul that it seemeth *no more terrible*, to all the ungodly that think they do believe it. Yea, and I would it did seem *more terrible* to the *most*, that it might affright *you* from your sin to God, and you might be saved. If you were running ignorantly into a *Cole-pit*, would you revile him that told you of it, and bid you stop if you love your life? Would you tell him that he speaks *bitterly* or *terribly* to you? It is not the *Preacher* that is the *cause* of your danger: he doth but *tell you* of it, that you may *scape*. If you are *saved*, you may thank *him*: but if you are *lost*, you may thank *your selves*. Its *you* that *deal bitterly* and *terribly* with *your selves*. *Telling* you of Hell, doth not *make* Hell: *Warning* you of it, is not *causing it*: Nor is it *God* that is *unmercifull*, but *you* are foolishly cruel and unmercifull to *your selves*. Do not think to *despise* the *patience* and *mercy* of the Lord, and then think to escape by accusing him of being

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unmercifull, and by saying, Its *terrible doctrine* that we preach to you impenitent sinners; I confess to thee it is *terrible*, and *more terrible* then thy senseless heart imagineth, or is yet aware of: One day, if grace prevent it not, thou shalt find it ten thousand times more terrible then thou canst apprehend it now. When thou *seest* thy *Judge* with millions of his Angels coming to *condemn thee*, thou wilt then say his *Laws are terrible* indeed. Thou hast to do with a *holy, jealous God*, who is a *consuming fire*, *Heb.* 12. 29. and can *such a God* be *despised* and not be *terrible* to thee? He is called, *The Great, the Mighty and the Terrible God*, Neh. 9. 32. Deut. 7. 21. *With God is terrible Majesty*, Job 37. 22. *He is terrible out of his holy place*, Psal. 68. 35. *He is terrible to the greatest*, even to *the Kings of the earth*, Psal. 76. 12. Its time for you therefore to *tremble* and *submit*, and think how unable you are to contend with him: and not *revile* his word or works because they are *terrible*, but fear him for them, and study them on purpose that you may fear and glorifie him: And as *David*, Psal. 66. 3. 5. [*Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! Through the greatness of thy power shall thy enemies submit themselves unto*

unto thee ——— *Come and see the works of the Lord! He is terrible in his doings toward the children of men:*] Psal. 99. 3. [*Let them praise thy Great and terrible name, for it is Holy.*] And will you *reproach* God or his *word* or *works*, or *Ministers*, with that which is the matter of his *Praise?* If it be *terrible* to *hear* of the wrath of God, how *terrible* will it be to *feel it?* *Choose not* a state of *terror* to *your selves*, and *preaching* will be *less terrible* to you. Yield to the sanctifying work of Christ, and receive his spirit: and then that which is *terrible* to others, will be *comfortable* to you. What *terror* is it to the *Regenerate* (that knoweth himself to be such) to hear that none but the Regenerate shall be saved? What terror is it to them that *mind the things of the spirit*, to hear of the misery of a *fleshly mind*, and that they that live after the *flesh shall die?* Rom. 8. 8. 13. The word of God is full of *terror* to the *ungodly*: But return with all your hearts to God, and then what word of God speaks *terror* to *you*? Truly *Sirs*, it is more in *your power* then *ours*, to *make our preaching easie* and *less terrible* to you! *We* cannot change *our doctrine*, but *you* may change *your state* and *lives*:

lives: *We* cannot preach *another Goſpel*: but you *may obey* the *Goſpel which we preach. Obey it* and it will be the moſt *comfortable* word to you in the world. *We* cannot *make void* the *word of God*: but you may *avoid* the *ſtroke* by penitent ſubmiſſion. Do you think it is fitter for *us* to change our *Maſters word*, and falſifie the Laws of God Almighty; or for *you* to change *your crooked courſes*, which are condemned by this word, and to let go the ſin which the Law forbiddeth? Its *you* that muſt change, and not *the Law*. Its *you* that muſt be conformed to *it*, and not *the Rule* that muſt be crookened to conform *to you*.

Say not as *Ahab* of *Michaiah*, of the Miniſter: [*I hate him, for he propheſieth not Good of me, but Evil,*] 1 Kings 22. 8. For a *Balaam* could profeſs that if the *King* [*would give him his houſefull of ſilver and gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord his God, to do leſs or more*] Numb. 22. 19. or [*to do either good or bad of his own mind*] as he after ſpeaks, *Chap.* 24. 13. *What good* would it do *you* for a *Preacher* to tell you a *lye* and ſay that you *may be pardoned* and *ſaved* in an *impenitent, unſanctified ſtate*? Do you think

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our saying so, would *make it so*? Will *God* falsifie *his word* to make good *ours*? Or would he not deal with *us* as *perfidious messengers* that had betrayed our trust, and belyed him, and deceived your souls? And would it *save* or *ease* an unregenerate man to have Christ condemn the Minister for deceiving him, and telling him that he *may be saved* in such a state?

Do but let go the *odious sin* that the word of God doth speak so ill of, and then it will speak *no ill* of *you*.

Alas Sirs, what *would you have* a poor Minister do, when *Gods command* doth cross *your pleasure*? and when he is sure to offend either *God* or *you*? Which should he venture to offend? If he help not the ungodly to know their misery, he offendeth *God*: If he *do it*, he offendeth them. If he tell you, that [*All they shall be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.*] Your hearts rise against him for talking of *Damnation* to you: And yet it is but the *words* of the *Holy Ghost*, 2 Thes. 2. 12. which we are bound to preach! [If he tell you that *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.*] *you* will be angry, (especially if he closely apply it to your selves.) And if he *do not tell* you so,

God

God will be angry: For it is his expreſs determination, *Rom.* 8. 13. And *whoſe* anger think you ſhould a wiſe man chooſe? or whoſe ſhould he moſt reſolutely avoid? The anger of the dreadfull God of Heaven, or yours? *Your anger* we can bear, if there be no remedy; but his anger is intolerable. When you have fretted, and fumed, and railed, and ſlandered us and our doctrine, we can *Live* yet; or if you *kill the Body*, you can *do no more*: You do but ſend us *before*, to be witneſſes againſt you, when you come to judgement. *But who can Live, when God* will pour out wrath upon him? *Numb.* 24. 23. We may keep *your ſlanders* and *indignation* from our *Hearts*: but it is the *Heart* that the Heart-ſearching God *contendeth* with: And who can *heal* the *Heart* which *he will break*? *You* may reach the *fleſh*; but he that is a *Spirit*, can afflict and wound the *Spirit*: *And a wounded ſpirit* (and wounded by him) *who can bear*? Prov. 18. 14. Would you not *your ſelves* ſay he were worſe, then mad, that would rather *abuſe* the *Eternal God*, then *croſs* the *miſguided deſires* of ſuch *worms as you*? that would *diſpleaſe God* to *pleaſe you*, and *ſell his Love* to purchaſe *yours*? Will *you* be *inſtead of God* to us when we have

have lost his favour? Will *you save us* from *him*, when he sendeth for our souls by death, or sentenceth us to Hell by judgement? Silly souls! how happy were you, could you *save yourselves!* Will *you* be our *Gods* if we *forsake our God? What you* that are but *skinfuls of corruption?* that will shortly be choaked with your *own filth* and *flegme*, and by your friends be laid to rot in silent undiscerned darkness, lest the loathsome sight or smell of you should annoy them. Blame not God to *use them* as *Enemies* and *Rebels*, that will *change him* for such *earthen Gods* as *you*. We have *One God*, and *but One*, and *he must be obeyed*, whether *you* like or dislike it: *There is one Law-giver that is able to save and to destroy*, Jam. 4. 12. and he *must* be pleased, whether it please your carnal minds or not: If *your wisdom now* will take the chair, and judge the *preaching of the Gospel* to be *foolishness*, or the *searching application* of it to be too much *harshness* and *severity*, I am sure you shall come down ere long, and hear *his sentence* that will convince you, that the *wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and the foolishness of God* (as Blasphemy dare call it) *is wiser then men*, 1 Cor. 3. 19. & 1. 25. And *God* will be the *final Judge*, and *his*

word ſhall ſtand when you have done your worſt. The worſt that the *Serpent* can do, is but to *hiſs a while* and put forth the *ſting*, and *bruiſe our heel:* but *Gods day* will be the *bruſing of his head*, and *Satan ſhall be bruiſed under feet*, Rom. 16. 20.

The *Sun will ſhine*, and the light thereof diſcover your deformities, whether *you will or not.* And if adulterers or thieves, that love the works of darkneſs, will do their worſt by force or flattery, they cannot make it ceaſe its ſhining, though they may *ſhut their eyes*, or hide themſelves in darkneſs from it light: Faithfull Teachers are the *Lights of the world*, Mat. 5. 14. They are not lighted by the Holy Ghoſt, to be *put under a buſhell, but on a candleſtick, that they may give light to all that are in the houſe*, ver. 15. What would you do with *Teachers* but to *Teach you*? And what ſhould they make known to you, if not *your ſelves*? Shall not the Phyſicion have leave to tell you of your *diſeaſes*?

Verily Sirs, a ſinner under the curſe of the Law, unſanctified and unpardoned, is not in a ſtate to be jeaſted and dallied with, unleſs you can play in the flames of Hell? Its plain dealing that he needs. A quibbling toyiſh, flaſhy Sermon is not the proper medicine

dicine for a lerhargick miſerable ſoul, nor fit to *Break* a *ſtony Heart*, nor to *bind up* a Heart thats kindly *broken*. *Heaven* and *Hell* ſhould not be talkt of in a canting, juggling, or pedanick ſtrain. A *Seneca* can tell you that its a Phyſicion that is *skilfull*, and not one thats *eloquent*, that we need. If he have alſo *fine* and *neat expreſſions*, we will not *deſpiſe* them; nor overmuch *value* them: *urendum*, *ſecandum*; Its *a cure* that we need; and the means are *beſt*, be they never ſo *ſharp*, that will *accompliſh it*. *Serious reverent Gravity* beſt ſuiteth with matters of ſuch incomprehenſible concernment. You ſet not a *School-boy* to make an *Oration*, to give an *aſſaulted City an allarm*, or to call men out to *quench a common fire*. You may *play* with *words* when the *caſe* will *bear* it: But as *dropping of beads* is too *ludicrous* for one that is *praying to be ſaved from the flames of Hell*; ſo a *ſleepy*, or a *hiſtrionical* ſtarched ſpeech, is *too light* and unlikely a means to call back a ſinner that is poſting to perdition; and muſt be *humbled* and *renewed* by the *Spirit*, or be for *ever damned*. *This* is *your caſe*, Sirs: And do you think the playing of a part upon a ſtage doth fit your caſe. O no! ſo great a buſineſs requireth all the ſerious

earnestness in the speaker that he can use. I am sure you *will* think so ere long your selves; And you will *then* think well of the Preachers that faithfully acquainted you with your case: and (if they succeed to your perdition) you will *curse* those that smoothed you up in your presumption, and hid your danger, by false doctrine, or misapplication, or seeming to discover it, indeed did hide it, by an hypocritical light, not serious mention of it. God can make use of clay and spittle to open the eyes of men born blind; and of Ramshorns to bring down the walls of *Jericho*: But usually he fitteth the *means* unto the *end*, and *works* on man *agreeably* to his *Nature*: And therefore if a blind understanding must be *enlightned*, you cannot expect that it should be done by *Squibs* and *Glowworms*, but by bringing into your souls the *powerfull celestial truth*, which shall shew you the *hidden corners* of your *hearts*, and the *hidden mysteries* of the *Gospel*, and the *unseen things* of the *other world*. If a *hardened heart* be to be *broken*, it is not *stroaking*, but *striking* that must do it. It is not the *sounding Brass*, *the tinkling Cymbal*, the carnal mind *puft up* with superficial *knowledge*, that is the instrument fitted to the *renewing*

ing of mens souls: But it is he that can acquaint you with what *he himself* hath been savingly acquainted: The heart is not *melted* into Godly sorrow, nor *raised* to the *life of Faith and Love*, by the *bubbles* of a frothy wit, or by a *game at words*, or *useless notions*; but by the *illuminating beams* of *Sacred Truth*, and the *attraction* of *Divine displayed Goodness* communicated from a mind that by *faith* hath *seen* the *Glory of God*, and by *experience* found that he is *Good*, and that *liveth* in the *Love of God*: such a one is *fitted* to assist you first in the knowledge of *your selves*, and then in the knowledge of *God in Christ*.

Did you consider what is the *office* of the Ministry, you would soon know what Ministers do most faithfully perform their office, and what kind of Teaching and oversight you should desire: And then you would be reconciled to the Light: and would choose the Teacher (could you have your choice) that would do most to help you to *know your selves*, and *know the Lord*.

I beseech you judge of *our work* by our *Commission*, and judge of it by *your own Necessities*. Have you more need to be acquainted with your *sin* and *danger*? or to

be *pleased* with a *set* of *handsome words*, which when they *are said*, do leave you as they found you; and leave no *Light* and *Life* and heavenly *Love* upon your hearts: that have no *substance* that you can *feed* upon in the review?

And what our *Commission* is you may find, in many places of the Scripture, *Ezek.* 3. 18, 19, 20, 21. [*When I say unto the Wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand: Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul:* ——— And [*If thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned, also thou hast delivered thy soul.*]

And what if they distaste our doctrine? must we forbear? *Verse* 11. [*Tell them, thus saith the Lord God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.*] So *Ezek.* 33. 1. to 10.

You know what came of *Jonah* for refusing

fusing to deliver Gods threatenings against *Nineve*.

Christs stewards must give to *each his portion*. He *himself* threatneth *damnation* to the *impenitent*, the *Hypocrites*, and *unbelievers*, *Luke* 13. 3. 5. *Mark* 16. 16. *Mat.* 24. 51. *Paul* saith of himself [*If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*, Gal. 1. 10. Patience and meekness is commanded to the Ministers of Christ, even in the *instructing of opposers*; But to what end? but [*that they may escape out of the snare of Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*] So that with all our *meekness* we must be *so plain* with you, as to make you *know* that you are *Satans captives, taken alive by him in his snares*, till *God by giving you Repentance* shall recover you, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25, 26.

The very *office* of the *Preachers* sent by Christ was [*to open mens eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance with the sanctified by faith in Christ,*] Acts 26. 18. which telleth you, that we *must* let men understand, that till *they are converted* and *sanctified*, they are *blind*, and in the *dark*, and *in the power of Satan*, far from God,

unpardoned, and having no part in the inheritance of Saints.

Christ tells the Pharisees, that they were *of their Father the Devil*, when they boasted that *God was their Father*, John 8. 44. And how plainly he tels them of their *hypocrisie*, and asketh them *how* they *can escape the damnation of Hell*, you may see in *Mat.* 23.

Paul thought it his *duty* to tell *Elymas*, *Acts* 13. 10. that he *was full of all subtilty and mischief, the child of the devil, and the enemy of all righteousness, a perverter of the right wayes of the Lord.* And *Peter* thought meet to tell *Simon Magus*, that he had *neither part, nor lot in that matter; that his heart was not right in the sight of God*; that he was in *the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity*, Acts 8. 21. 23.

The charge of *Paul* to *Timothy* is plain and urgent, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom, Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort.*] And to *Titus* chap. 1. 13. *Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*

Judge now whether Ministers must deal *plainly* or *deceitfully* with you: and whether

ther it be the *searching healing truth* that they must bring you, or a *smooth tale* that hath no salt or savour in it: And would you have us break these Laws of God, for *nothing* but to *deceive* you, and tell you a *lie*, and make the *ungodly* believe that he is *godly*: or to *hide* the truth that is necessary to your salvation? Is the *Knowledge of your selves* so intolerable a thing to you?

Beloved Hearers, either it is *true* that you are yet unsanctified, or it *is not*: If it be *not*, it is none of our desire you should think so: We do all that we can to *cure* the *mistakes* of troubled Christians, that think themselves *worse* then indeed they are. But if it be *true*, tell me, *Why* would you not know it? I hope it is not because you would not be *remembred* of your *woe*, and so *tormented before the time*. I hope you think not that we delight to vex mens consciences with fear; or to see men live in grief and trouble, rather then in well grounded peace and joy. And if indeed you are yet unregenerate, that is not long of us that tell you of it, but of your selves that wilfully continue it: Do we *make* you *ungodly* by telling you of your ungodliness? Is it we that *hinder* the *forgiveness* of your sins, by letting you know that they are

not

not forgiven? O no! *We ſtrive* for your *converſion* to *this end* that *your ſins may be forgiven you*; and *you hinder* the *forgiveneſs of them* by *refuſing* to be be converted. When God forſaketh ſtubborn ſouls for reſiſting his grace, note how he expreſſeth his ſeverity againſt them, Mark 4. 12. *That ſeeing they may ſee and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not underſtand, leſt at any time they ſhould be converted, and their ſins ſhould be forgiven them.*] You ſee here, that till they are *converted*, mens *ſins* are *not forgiven them.* And that whoever procureth the *forgiveneſs of their ſins*, muſt do it by procuring their *Converſion*: And that the *hindring* of their *Converſion* is the *hindering* of their *forgiveneſs.* And that *blindneſs of mind* is the great hinderance of *converſion*: when men do not *perceive* the very things which they *ſee*, (not knowing the reaſon and the ſenſe and end of them, but the out-ſide only:) Nor *underſtand* the things which they *hear*: And therefore undoubtedly the Teacher that brings you a *Light* into your minds, and firſt ſheweth you *your ſelves*, and your *unconverted* and your *unpardoned* ſtate, is he that takes the way to your *Converſion* and *forgiveneſs*: As the fore-cited Text

ſheweth

sheweth you, Acts 18. 26. [*I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light* (that they may first know themselves , and then know God in Jesus Christ) *and from the power of Satan,* (who ruled them as their Prince, and captivated them as their Jaylor) *unto God* (whom they had forsaken as a Guide and Governour, and were deprived of as their Protector, Portion and felicity ;) *that they may receive forgiveness of sins* (which none receive but the converted) *and an inheritance among them that are sanctified* (for Glory is the inheritance of the Saints alone, *Col.* 1. 12.) (and all this) *through faith that is in me* (by believing in me, and giving up themselves unto me, that by my Satisfaction, Merits, Teaching, Spirit, Intercession and Judgement, it may be accomplished.)

Truly Sirs, if we knew how to procure your *conversion* and *forgiveness*, *without* making you know that you are *uncoverted* & *unpardoned*, we would do it, & not trouble you needlesly with so sad a discovery. Let that man be accounted a butcher of souls, & not a Physician for them, that delighteth to *torment* them. Let him be accounted unworthy to be a Preacher of the Gospel, that enviеth you your peace and comfort. We would

not

not have you think one jot worse of your condition then it is. Know but the very *truth*, what case you *are in*; and we desire no more.

And so far are we by this from driving you to *Desperation*, that it is your *Desperation* that we would *prevent* by it; which can *no other way be prevented*. When you are past *Remedy*, *Desperation* cannot be avoided: And this is necessary to your *Remedy*: There is a *conditional Despair*, and an *Absolute Despair*: The former is *necessary* to prevent the *latter*, and to bring you to a state of *Hope*. A man that hath the tooth ache, may perhaps *despair* of being eased *without drawing the tooth*; or a man that hath a *gangrened foot* may *despair* of life, *unless it be cut off*: that so *by the cure*, he may not be left to an *Absolute despair* of life. So you must *despair* of *being pardoned or saved without conversion*, that you may be *converted*, and so *have hope* of your salvation, and be saved from *final absolute despair*. I hope you will not be offended with him, that would perswade you to *Despair of living unless you will eat and drink*. You have no more reason to be offended with him that would have you *despair of being pardoned* or *saved* without Christ, or without his sanctifying Spirit.

Having

HAving said so much of the Necessity of Ministers endeavouring to make unregenerate sinners *know themselves*, I shall next try what I can do *towards* it, with those that hear me, by proposing these few Questions to your consideration.

Quest. 1. *Do you think that you were ever unsanctified, and in a state of wrath and condemnation or not?* If *not*, then you are not the off-spring of *Adam*: you are not then of humane race: For the Scripture telleth you that [*We are conceived in sin,*] Psal. 51 5. And [*That by one man sin entred into the world, and Death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*] *and that by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation*; Rom 5. 12. 18. And that [*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*] Rom. 3. 23. [*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 John 1. 8. 10. And *the wages of sin is death*, Rom. 6. 23.

And I hope you will *confess* that you cannot be *pardoned* and *saved* without a *Saviour*; and therefore that as you *need* a *Saviour*, so you must have a *special interest* in

in him. It is as certain that *Chriſt ſaveth not at all*, as that he *ſaveth any*: For the ſame word aſſureth us of *the one*, and of *the other*.

Queſt. 2. But if you confeſs that *once* you *were children of wrath*, my next Queſtion is, *Whether you know how and when you were delivered from ſo ſad a ſtate?* or at leaſt *Whether it be done, or not?* Perhaps you'le ſay, It was done in your *Baptiſm*, which waſheth away Original ſin. But granting you that all that have a *Promiſe* of *pardon before*, have that *promiſe ſealed*, and that *pardon delivered* them by *Baptiſm*, I ask you.

Queſt. 3. *Do you think that Baptiſm by water only will ſave, unleſs you be alſo baptized by the ſpirit?* Chriſt telleth you the *contrary* with a vehement aſſeveration, John 3.5. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*] And *Peter* tels you that it is [*not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God*, 1 Pet. 2.21. *If therefore you have not the ſpirit of Chriſt*, for all your Baptiſm, *you are none of his*, Rom. 8.9. For *that which is born of the fleſh is* (but) *fleſh*, and you muſt be

born

born of the spirit if you will be *spiritual*, John 3. 6.

I shall further grant you, that *many* receive the *spirit* of Christ even in their *infancy*, and may be *savingly* as well as *Sacramentally* then *Regenerate*. And if this be your case you have very great cause to be thankfull for it. But I next enquire of you.

Quest. 4. *Have you not lived an unholy carnal life since you came to the use of reason?* Have you not *since* then declared, that you did not live the life of faith, nor walk after the *spirit* but the *flesh*? If so, then it is certain that you have need of a *Conversion* from that *ungodly state*, what ever *Baptism* did for you: And therefore you are still to enquire whether you have been converted since you came to age.

And I must needs remember you, that your *Infant Covenant* made in Baptism, being upon your *parents faith* and *consent*, and not *your own*, will serve your turn no longer then your *Infancy*, unless when you come to the use of Reason, you *renew* and *own* that Covenant your selves, and have a *personal faith and Repentance* of your *own*. And whatever you received in *Baptism*, this must be our next enquiry.

Quest.

Queſt. 5. *Did you ever ſince you came to age upon ſound Repentance, and renunciation of the fleſh, the world and the devil, give up your ſelves unfeignedly by faith to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; and ſhew by the performance of this holy Covenant, that you were ſincere in the making of it?*

I confeſs it is a matter ſo hard to moſt, to aſſign the *time* and *manner* of their *Converſion*, that I think it no ſafe way of trial. And therefore I will iſſue all in this one Queſtion.

Queſt. 6. *Have you the Neceſſary parts of the New Creature now?* though perhaps you know not juſt *when* or *how* it was formed in you? The Queſtion is, *Whether you are now in a ſtate of ſanctification?* and not, *Whether you can tell juſt when you did receive it?* He that would know Whether he be *a Man*, muſt not do it by remembring *when he was born*, or *how he was formed*; but by diſcerning the *Rational nature* in himſelf at *preſent*. And though *Grace* be more obſervable to us in its *enterance*, then *Nature* (as finding, and entering into, a *diſcerning ſubject*, which Nature doth not:) Yet it beginneth ſo *early* with ſome, and ſo *obſcurely* with others, and in others the preparations

preparations are so long or notable, that its hard to say when special grace came in. But you may well discern Whether it be there, or not? and that is the Question that must be resolved, if you would *know your selves.*

And, though I have been long in these exhortations to incline your Wils, I shall be short in giving you those Evidences of the Holy Life, which must be before your eyes while you are upon the trial.

In summ, *If your very hearts do now unfeignedly consent to the Covenant which you made in Baptism, and your Lives express it to be a true Consent,* I dare say you *are regenerate*, though you know not *just when* you first *consented.*

Come on then, and let us enquire what you say to the several parts of your *Baptismal Covenant.*

1. If you are sincere in the Covenant you have made with Christ, *You do resolvedly Consent, that God shall be your only God, as reconciled to you by Jesus Christ:* Which is, 1. That you will take him for *your Owner* or *your Absolute Lord*, and *give up your selves to him as his Own.*

2. That *You will take him for your Supream Governour, and Consent to be subject*

to his Government and Laws; taking his *Wiſdom* for your *Guide*, and his *Will* for the *Rule* of your *Wills* and *Lives*.

3. That *you will take him for your chief-eſt Benefactor, from whom you receive and expect all your Happineſs*, and *to whom you owe your ſelves and all, by way of Thankfulneſs*: And that you take his *Love* and *favour* for *your Happineſs it ſelf*, and prefer the Everlaſting Enjoyment of his *Glorious ſight* and *Love* in *Heaven*, before all the ſenſual pleaſures of the world.

I would prove the neceſſity of all theſe by Scripture as we go, but that it is *evident in it ſelf*; theſe three *Relations* being *Eſſential* to *God* as *our God in Covenant*. He is not *our God*, if not *our Owner*, *Ruler* and *Benefactor*. You profeſs all this, when you profeſs but to *Love God*, or *take him for your God*.

2. In the *Covenant of Baptiſm* you do profeſs to *believe in Chriſt, and take him for your only Saviour*: If you do this in ſincerity, 1. You do *unfeignedly Beleive the doctrine of* his *Goſpel*, and the *Articles of the Chriſtian faith*, concerning his *Perſon*, his *Offices*, and his *ſuffering and works*. 2. You do *take* him unfeignedly for the *only Redeemer and Saviour* of mankind, and *Give up your*

your selves to be saved by his Merits, Righteousness, Intercession, *&c.* as he hath promised in his word. 3. You *trust upon him and his promises*, for the attainment of your *Reconciliation* and *Peace* with *God*, your *Justification*, *Adoption*, *Sanctification*, and the *Glory* of the *life to come*. 4. You *take him for your Lord and King*, your *Owner and Ruler* by the right of *Redemption*; and your *grand Benefactor*, that hath obliged you to *Love and Gratitude*, by saving you from the wrath to come, and purchasing eternal Glory for you, by his most wonderfull condescension, life and sufferings.

3. In the *Baptismal Covenant*, you are engaged to the *Holy Ghost*. If you are sincere in *this branch* of your *Covenant*, 1. You discern your *sins* as *odious* and *dangerous*, as the *corruption* of your *souls*, and that which displeaseth the most Holy God. 2. You *see* an *excellency* in *Holiness* of *Heart* and *Life*, as the Image of God, the rectitude of man, and that which fits him for eternal blessedness, and maketh him amiable in the eyes of God. 3. You unfeignedly *desire* to be *rid of your sin*, how dear soever it hath been to you: and to be perfectly sanctifyed by the Holy Spirit, by his de-

grees, in the uſe of the means which he hath appointed: and you *conſent* that the *Holy Ghoſt* as your ſanctifier do *purifie you* and *kindle* the *Love of God* in you, and bring it to *perfection*.

4. In *Baptiſm* you profeſs to *renounce the world, the fleſh, and the Devil:* that is, as they ſtand for your Hearts *againſt the Will* and *Love of God*, and againſt the *Happineſs* of the *unſeen world*; and againſt your *Faith in Chriſt your Saviour*; and againſt the *ſanctifying work* of the *Holy Ghoſt*. If therefore you are ſincere in *this part* of your *Covenant*, you do upon deliberation perceive all the *pleaſures*, *profits* and *honours* of this world to be ſo vain and worthleſs, that you are *Habitually reſolved*, to prefer the Love and favour of God, and your ſalvation before them; and to be *Ruled* by *Jeſus Chriſt* and his *Spirit* and *word*, rather then by the *deſires* of the *fleſh*, or the *worlds allurements*, or the will of man, or the ſuggeſtions of the devil: and to forſake all rather then forſake the *Father*, the *Saviour*, the *Sanctifier* to whom you are devoted, and the everlaſting life which upon his promiſe you have taken for your Hope and Portion. This is the ſenſe of Baptiſm, and all this in profeſſion be-

ing

ing *Essential* to your *Baptism*, must be *Essential* to your *Christianity*: Your *Parents Profession* of it was necessary to *your infant title* to the outward priviledges of the Church: Your own *personal profession* is necessary to your continuance of those priviledges, and your visible Christianity and communion with the adult: And the *Truth* of what you *profess*, is necessary to your *reall Christianity before God*, and to your *title to Salvation*: And this is it that is to be now enquired after. You cannot hope to be admitted into Heaven, upon lower terms then the sincerity of that profession with entereth you into the Church: While we tell you of no higher matters *necessary* to *your salvation*, then the *sincerity* of that which is necessary to *Baptism* and *Christianity*, I hope you will not say we deal *too strictly* with you. Enquire now by a diligent tryal of your hearts, whether you *truly consent* to all these articles of *your Baptismal Vow or Covenant*. If *you do*, you are *Regenerate* by the *Spirit*: If you *do not*, you have but the *Sacrament* of Regeneration: which aggravateth your guilt, as a violated profession and Covenant must needs do. And I do not think, that any man worthy to be dis-

courſed with, will have the face to tell you that any man at the uſe of Reaſon, is by his Baptiſm, (or any thing elſe) in a ſtate of Juſtification and Salvation, *whoſe heart doth not ſincerely conſent to the Covenant of Baptiſm, and whoſe Life expreſſeth not that conſent.*

Hence therefore you may perceive that it is a thing unqueſtionable, that all theſe perſons are yet unregenerate and in the bond of their iniquity.

1. All thoſe that have not unfeignedly *devoted themſelves to God*, as being *not their own but his.* *His* by the *title of Creation*, Pſal. 100. 3. [*Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves, we are his people, and the ſheep of his paſture.*] And *His* by the *title* of *Redemption:* for *we are bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 7. 23. And he that unfeignedly taketh *God* for *his Owner*, and *Abſolute Lord*, will heartily *give up himſelf* unto him; as *Paul* ſaith of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *They firſt gave up their own ſelves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God.*]

And he that entirely giveth up himſelf to God, doth with himſelf ſurrender *all that he hath* in *deſire* and *reſolution.* As

Chriſt

Christ *with himself* doth *give us all things*, *Rom.* 8. 32. and *addeth other things to them that seek first his Kingdom and its Righteousness*, Matth. 6. 33. so *Christians with themselves do give up all they have to Christ.*

And he that *giveth up himself to God*, will *live to God*: And he that taketh not himself to be *his Own*, will take *nothing* for *his Own*: but will study the interest of his Lord, and think he is best disposed of when he honoureth him most, and serveth him best, 1 Cor. 6. 19. 20. [*Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods.*

If any of you devote not your selves unfeignedly to God, and make it not your first enquiry, what *God* would have you *be and do*, but live to *your selves*, and yet think your selves in a state of Life, you are mistaken, and do not *know your selves.* What abundance might easily see their miserable condition in this discovery! Who say in effect [*our lips are our own: Who is Lord over us?* Psal. 12. 4.] and rather *hate* and *oppose* the interest of *God* and *Holiness* in the world, then devote themselves to the promoting of it! Deut. 32. 6. [*Do ye*

thus requite the Lord, ye fooliſh people and unwiſe? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?]

2. All thoſe are unregenerate and in a ſtate of death, that *are not ſincerely ſubjected to the Governing will of God*, but are *Ruled* by their *carnal Intereſt* and *deſires*; and the word of a *man* that can *gratifie* or *hurt* them, can do more with them then the *word of God*: To ſhew them the command of *a man* that they think, can *undo* them if they diſobey, doth more prevail with them then to ſhew them the *command of God* that can condemn them unto endleſs miſery: They more *fear* men that *can kill the body*, then God that can *deſtroy both ſoul and body in Hell fire*. When the *luſt* of the *fleſh*, and the *will* of *man*, do bear more *ſway* then the *will of God*, its certain that ſuch a ſoul is *unregenerate*, Rom. 6. 3, 4, 6. *Know ye not that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death? therefore we are buried with him by Baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life* ——— *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth*

forth we should not serve sin, —— v. 16. *Know ye not that to whom you yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

1 Pet. 4. 1, 2. *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm your selves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin: that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*]

3. All those are *unregenerate*, that *depend not upon God as their chiefest Benefactor*: and do not most carefully apply themselves to him, as knowing that *in his favour is life*, Psal. 30. 5. and that *his loving kindness is better then life*,] Psal. 63. 3. and that to *his judgement* we *must* finally *stand or fall*: but do ambitiously seek the favour of men, and call them their *Benefactors*, (*Luke* 22. 25. *Matth.* 23. 9.) whatever become of the favour of God. He is no *child of God* that *preferreth* not the *Love of God* before the *Love of all the world*. He is no *heir of heaven*, that *preferreth* not the *fruition of God in Heaven*, before all worldly glory and felicity, *Col.* 4. 1, 2, 3. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above*

above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.] The *Love of God* is the *summ of Holiness*; the *Heart* of the new creature; the perfecting of it is the perfection and felicity of man.

4. They are certainly *unregenerate* that *Believe not the Gospel*, and *take not Christ for their only Saviour*, and his *promises of Grace and Glory* as *purchased* by *his Sacrifice and Merits*, for the Foundation of their *hopes*, on which they resolve to trust their souls for *pardon* and for *peace with God, and endless Happiness*, Acts 4. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*] 1 John 5. 11, 12. *This is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.*]

When our Happiness was in *Adams* hands, he lost it: It is now put into safer hands, and *Jesus Christ* the *second Adam* is become our *Treasury*. He is the *Head of the Body*, from whom each member hath quickning influence, *Eph.* 1. 22. The *life* of *Saints* is *in him*, as the life of the tree is in the root, *unseen*, Col. 4. 3, 4. *Holiness* is a

Living

Living unto God in Christ; Though we are *dead with Christ*, to the Law, and to the world, and to the flesh, we are *alive to God*. So *Paul* describeth *our* case in his *own*, Gal. 2. 19, 20. *I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,*] Rom. 6. 11. *Likewise reckon ye also your selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*] Christ is the *Vine*, and we are *the branches: without him we can do nothing: If you abide not in him, and his words in you, you are cast forth as a branch, and withered, which men gather and cast into the fire, and they are burnt,*] John 15. 1, 5, 6, 7. In *Baptism* you are *married unto Christ*, as to the *external solemnization*; and in *spiritual Regeneration* your *Hearts* do inwardly close with him, entertain him, and resign themselves unto him, by *Faith* and *Love*; and by a *resolved Covenant* become his *own*: And therefore *Baptism* and the *Lords Supper* are called *Sacraments*, because as Souldiers were wont by an Oath and listing their names, and other

engaging

engaging Ceremonies to oblige themſelves to their Commanders, and their *Vow* was called *A Sacrament*: ſo do we engage our ſelves to Chriſt in the holy *Vow* or *Covenant entered* in *Baptiſm*, and *renewed* in the *Lords Supper.*

5. That perſon is certainly unregenerate that never was convinced of a *Neceſſity of Sanctification*, or never perceived an excellency and amiableneſs in Holineſs of heart and life, and loved it in others and deſired it himſelf: and never gave up himſelf to the Holy Ghoſt, to be further ſanctified in the uſe of his appointed means; deſiring to be perfect, and willing to preſs forward towards the mark, and to abound in grace. Much leſs is that perſon *renewed* by the *Holy Ghoſt*, that *hateth Holineſs*, and had rather be without it, and would not walk in the fear and obedience of the Lord.

The *Spirit of Holineſs* is that *Life* by which Chriſt *quickneth* all that are his *members.* He is no *member* of *Chriſt* that is without it: Rom. 8. 9. *According to his Mercy, he ſaveth us by the waſhing of Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt,* Tit. 3. 5.

6. That perſon is unregenerate that is under the *Dominion* of his *fleſhly deſires*, and *mindeth*

mindeth the things of the flesh above the things of the Spirit; and hath not *mortified* it so *far*, as not to *live according to it*. A *carnal mind*, and a *carnal life*, are *opposite* to *Holiness*, as *Sickness* is to *Health*, and *Darkness* unto *Light*, Rom. 8. 1. to 14. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*——*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God*——*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if by the spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*] [*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, revellings and such like; of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is Love,*

Joy,

Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance: againſt ſuch there is no Law: And they that are Chriſts, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections, and luſts, Galat. 5. 18. to 25.

7. Laſtly, that perſon is certainly *unregenerate*, that *ſo far valueth* and *loveth this world*, or any of the carnal accommodations therein, as *practically* to *prefer* them before the *Love of God*, and the *Hopes* of *Everlaſting Glory: ſeeking it firſt*, with *higheſt eſtimation*, and *holding it faſteſt*; ſo as that he will rather venture his *ſoul* upon the threatned wrath of God, then his *body* upon the wrath of man; and will be religious no further then may conſiſt with his proſperity or ſafety in the world, and hath ſomething that he cannot part with for Chriſt and heaven, becauſe it is dearer to him then they: Let this man go never ſo far in Religion, as long as he goeth further for the world, and ſetteth it neareſt to his heart, and holds it faſteſt, and will do moſt for it, and conſequently loveth it better then Chriſt, he is no trne Chriſtian, nor in a ſtate of grace.

The Scriptures put this alſo out of doubt; as you may ſee, Mat. 10. 37, 38. & Luke 14. 26,

14.26,27,33. *He that loveth Father or Mother more then me, is not worthy of me,* &c. *Whosoever doth not bear his Cross and come after me, cannot be my Disciple. Whoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. Know ye not that the friendship of the world, is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God,* Jam. 4. 4. No wonder then if the *world* must be *renounced* in our *Baptism.* [*Love not the World, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,* 1 John 2. 15.

You see by this time, what it is to be *Regenerate*, and to be a *Christian indeed*, by what is contained even in our *Baptism*: and consequently how you may *Know your selves, whether* you are *sanctified*, and the *heirs of heaven*, or *not*.

Again therefore I summon you to appear before your consciences: and if indeed these Evidences of regeneration are not in you, stop not the sentence, but confess your sinfull miserable state, and condemn your selves, and say no longer, I hope yet that my present condition may serve turn, and that God will forgive me though I should

die

die without any further change: Thoſe *Hopes* that you may be ſaved without regeneration, or that you *are regenerate* when you *are not*, are the pillars of Satans fortreſs in your hearts, and keep you from the *ſaving Hopes* of the Regenerate, that that will never make you aſhamed. Uphold not that which Chriſt is engaged againſt: Down it muſt, either by Grace or Judgement: and therefore abuſe not your ſouls by underpropping ſuch an ill-grounded falſe deceitfull hope. You have now time to take it down ſo orderly and ſafely, as that it fall not on your heads and overwhelm you not for ever. But if you ſtay till death ſhall undermine it, the fall will be great, and your ruine irreparable. If you are wiſe, therefore *Know your ſelves in time.*

II. I have done with that part of my *ſpecial Exhortation* which concerned the *unregenerate*: I am next to ſpeak to thoſe of you that by *Grace* are brought into a *better ſtate*: and to tell you, that it very much concerneth *you alſo*, even the *beſt* of you to labour to be *well acquainted with your ſelves*: and that both in reſpect of

of 1. *Your sins and Wants*, and 2. *Your Graces* and *your duties*.

I. Be *acquainted* with the *root* and *remnant* of *your sins*: with your *particular inclinations* and *corrupt affections*: with their *quality*, their *degree* and *strength*: with the *weaknesses* of every *grace*: with your *disability* to *duty*: and with the *omissions* or *sinfull practises* of your *lives*. Search *diligently* and *deeply*; *frequently* and *accurately* peruse your *hearts* and *wayes*, till you certainly and throughly *know your selves*.

And I beseech you let it not suffice you that you *know your states*, and have found your selves in the *Love of God*, in the *faith of Christ*, and possessed by his *Spirit*. Though this be a mercy worth many worlds, yet this is *not all* concerning your selves that you have to know. If *yet* you say that you *have no sin*, *you deceive your selves*. If yet you think you are past all danger, your danger is the greater for this mistake. As much as you have been *humbled* for sin: as much as you have *loathed* it, and your selves for it: as oft as you have *confessed* it, *lamented* it, and *complained* and *prayed* against it, yet it is *alive*: Though it be *mortified*, it is *alive*. It is said to be *mortified*

as to the *prevalency* and *reign*, but the *reliſts* of it yet *ſurvive*: were it *perfectly dead*, you were *perfectly delivered* from it, and might ſay *you have no ſin*: but it is not yet ſo happy with you. It will find work for the *blood* and *ſpirit* of Chriſt, and for *your ſelves*, as long as you are in the fleſh. And alas, too many that know themſelves to be *upright* in the *main*, are yet ſo much unacquainted with their hearts and lives as to the *degrees* of *grace* and *ſin*, as that it much diſadvantageth them in their Chriſtian progreſs. Go along with me in the carefull obſervation of theſe following Evils, that may befall even the regenerate by the *remnants of ſelf-ignorance*.

1. *The work of Mortification is very much hindered, becauſe you know your ſelves no better*: as may appear in all theſe following diſcoveries.

1. You *confeſs not ſin to God or man* ſo *penitently* and *ſenſibly* as you ought, becauſe you *know your ſelves* no better. Did you ſee your inſide with a fuller view, how deeply would you aggravate your ſin? How heavily would you charge your ſelves? Repentance would be more intenſe and more effectual: and when you were more contrite, you would be more meet for the ſenſe of pardon,

pardon, and for Gods delight, *Isa.* 51. 15. & 66. 2. It would fill you more with godly shame and self-abhorrence, if you better *knew your selves.* It would make you more sensibly say with *Paul*, Rom. 7. 23, 24. [*I see another Law in my members warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!*] And with *David*, *Psal.* 38. 18. *I will declare my iniqnity; I will be sorry for my sin*, & 40. 12. *They are more then the hairs of my head*, & 32. 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniqnity have I not hid: I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*] *Repentance* is the *Death of sin:* and the *knowledge of our selves*, and the *sight of our sins*, is the *life* of *Repentance.*

2. You *pray not against sin*, for *grace and pardon* so *earnestly* as you should, because you *know your selves* no better. O that God would but open these too-close hearts unto us, and anatomize the reliques of the old man, and shew us all the recesses of our self-deceit, and the filth of worldliness, and carnal inclinations that lurk within us, and read us a Lecture upon every

part; what prayers would it teach us to indite! That you be not proud of your holiness, let me tell you Christians, that a full display of the corruptions that the best of you carry about you, would not only take down self-exalting thoughts, that you be not lift up above measure, but would teach you to pray with fervour and importunity, and waken you out of your sleepy indifferency, and make you cry, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!* If the sight of a *Lazar* or cripple or naked person move you to compassion, though they use no words: if the sight of a man that is gasping for want of your relief, will affect you: surely the sight of your *own deformities, wants* and *dangers* would affect you if you saw them as they are. How many a sin do you *forget* in your *Confessions* that should have a *particular Repentance*? and how many *wants* do you *overlook in prayers*, that should have *particular petitions* for a merciful supply? And how many are *lightly touched*, and run over with words of course, that would be *earnestly insisted on*, if you did but *better know your selves!* O that God would persuade you better to *study your hearts*, and *pray out of that Book* when ever you draw nigh him: that you not might be so like

like the Hypocrites, that *draw near to him with the lips*, when *their hearts are far from him*. To my shame I must confess that my soul is too dry and barren in holy supplications to God, and too little affected with my confessed sins and wants: but I am forced to lay all in a very great measure upon the imperfect acquaintance that I have at home: I cannot think I should *want matter* to pour out before the Lord in confession and petition, nor so much want *fervour* and *earnestness* with God, if my Heart and life lay open to my view, while I am upon my knees.

3. It is for want of a *fuller knowledge of your selves* that you are so *negligent in your Christian watch*, that you do no better *guard* your *senses*; that you make no stricter a Covenant with your *eyes*, your *appetites*, your *tongues*: that you no more examine what you *think*, *affect* and *say*: what passeth *into* your *heart* or *out of it*: that you call not *your selves* more frequently to *account*; but dayes run on, and duties are carelesly performed as of course, and no daily or weekly reckoning made to conscience of all. The knowledge of your weaknesses, and readiness to yield, and of your treacherous corruptions that comply

with the enemy, would make you more ſuſpicious of your ſelves, and to walk more *circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe*, Eph. 5.15. and to look under your feet, and *conſider your wayes* before you were too bold and venturous. It was the conſciouſneſs of their own infirmity, that ſhould have moved the diſciples to *watch and pray*, Mat. 26. 41. [*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.*] And *all* have the ſame charge, becauſe *all* have the ſame infirmity and danger, [*What I ſay to you, I ſay unto all, Watch,*] Mar. 13.37. Did we better *know* how many advantages our own corruptions give the Tempter, that charge of the Holy Ghoſt would awake us all to ſtand to our arms and look about us: 1 Cor. 16. 13. *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith: quit you like men, be ſtrong*:] And *Epheſ.* 6. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the Devil: For we wraſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places*, &c.] When men know not whoſe legs they ſtand upon, they grow heedleſs of their way, and quickly ſlide.

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The *knowledge of our selves* doth shew us all the *advantages* of the tempter: what he hath to work upon, and what in us to take his part, and consequently where he is likest to assault us: and so puts us into so prepared a posture for defence, as very much hindereth his success. But so far as we do *not know our selves*, we are like blind men in fensing, that the adversary may hit in what part he please: we have so many *hidden enemies* in our *houses*, as will quickly open the door to more. What sin may not Satan tempt a man into, that is not acquainted with the corruptions and frailties of his *own heart*?

4. It is for want of *Self-acquaintance* that we make not *out for help against our sin to Ministers* or other friends that could assist us: And that we use the *confirming Ordinances* with no more care and diligence. All the abilities and willingness of others, and all the helps of Gods appointment, will be neglected, when we should imploy them against our sins, so far as self-ignorance doth keep us from discerning the necessity of them.

5. It is for want of a fuller *knowledge of our selves*, that *many lie long in sins unobserved by themselves*: and many are on the

declining hand, and take no notice of it. And how little *reſiſtance* or mortifying endeavours we are like to beſtow upon *unknown* or *unobſerved* ſins, is eaſie to conceive. How many may we obſerve to have notable blemiſhes of Pride, oſtentation, deſire of preheminence and eſteem, envy, malice, ſelf-conceitedneſs, ſelf-ſeeking, cenſoriouſneſs, uncharitableneſs, and ſuch like, that ſee no more of it in themſelves, then is in more mortified men? How ordinarily do we hear the Paſtors that watch over them, and their friends that are beſt acquainted with them, lamenting the miſcarriages, and the careleſs walking and declining of many that ſeem Religious, when they lament it not themſelves, nor will not be convinced that they are ſick of any ſuch diſeaſe, any more then all other Chriſtians are? Hence comes the ſtifneſs of too many ſuch, againſt all that can be ſaid to humble and reform them: and that they are ſo impatient of reproof, and think reprovers do them wrong: and its well if it abate not Chriſtian love, and procure not ſome degree of hatred or diſpleaſure. Like a man that is entring into a conſumption, and takes it for an injury to be told ſo, till his languiſhing and decay convince him.

Hence

Hence it is that we have all need to lament in general our unknown sins, and say with *David* [*Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*] Psalm 19. 12. Hence it is that we can seldom tell men of the most discernable faults, but they meet us with excuses, and justifie themselves.

There are few of us I think, that observe our hearts at all, but find both upon any *special illumination*, and in the hour of *discovering tryals*, that there were many distempers in our *hearts*, and many miscarriages in our *lives*, that we never took notice of before. The Heart hath such secret corners of uncleanness, such mysteries of iniquity, and depths of deceitfulness, that many fearing God, are strangely unacquainted with themselves, as to the particular motions and degrees of sin, till some *notable providence*, or *gracious light* assist them in the discovery. I think it not unprofitable here to give you some instances, of sin undiscerned by the servants of the Lord themselves that have it, till the light come in that makes them wonder at their former darkness.

In *General* first observe these two. 1. The *secret Habits* of sin, being discernable only by

by some acts, are many times unknown to us, because we are under no *strong temptation* to commit those sins. And its a wonderfull hard thing for a man that hath little or no *temptation*, to *know himself*, and know what he should do, if he had the temptations of other men. And O what sad discoveries are made in the *hour of temptation*? What swarms of vice break out in some, like vermin that lay hid in the cold of Winter, and crawle about when they feel the Summers heat! What horrid corruptions which we never observed in our selves before, do shew themselves in the hour of *temptation*! Who would have thought that *Righteous Noah* had in the *Ark* had such a heart, as would by carelesness fall into the sin of *drunkenness*? or that *righteous Lot* had carried from *Sodom* the seed of drunkenness and incest in him? or that *David*, a man so eminent in holiness, and a *man after Gods own heart*, had a *heart* that had in it the seeds of *Adultery* and *Murder*? Little thought *Peter*, when he professed Christ, *Mat.*16.16. that there had been in him such carnality and unbelief, as would have so soon provoked Christ to say, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest*

reſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men, ver. 22.23. And little did he think when he ſo vehemently profeſſed his reſolution rather to die with Chriſt then deny him, that there had been then in his heart the ſeed that would bring forth this bitter fruit, *Mat.* 26. 74, 75. Who knows whats *virtually* in a *ſeed*, that never ſaw the tree, or taſted of the fruit?

Eſpecially when we have not only a *freedom* from *temptations*, but alſo the moſt *powerful means* to keep under *vitious habits*, its hard to know *how far* they are *mortified* at the *root*. When men are among thoſe that countenance the contrary vertue, and where the vice is in diſgrace, and where examples of piety and temperance are ſtill before their eyes: If they dwell in ſuch places and company, where *Authority* and *Friendſhip* and *Reaſon* do all take part with *good*, and cry down the *evil*, no wonder if the evil that is *unmortified* in mens *hearts*, do not much break out to their own or others obſervations through all this oppoſition. The inſtance of King *Joaſh* is famous for this: who *did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, all the dayes of* Jehojada *the Prieſt that inſtructed him*, 2 Kings 12. 2. but *after his death, when the*

Princes

Princes of Juda *flattered him with their obeysance, he left the house of God and served Idols, till wrath came upon the land:* and was so hardened in sin, as to murder *Zechariah* the Prophet of God, and son of that *Jehojada* that had brought him out of obscurity, and set him upon the Throne, even because he spake in the name of the Lord against his sin; 2 *Chron.* 24. 20, 21, 22.

Who would have thought that it had been in the *heart of Solomon*, a man so Wise, so Holy, and so Solemnly engaged to God, by his publick professions and works, to have committed the abominations mentioned, 1 *Kings* 11. 4.?

If you say, that *all this proveth not that there was any seed or root of such a sin in the Heart before: but only that the temptation did prevail to cause the acts first, and then such habits as those acts did tend to*; I answer; 1. I grant that temptations do not only *discover* what is in the *heart*, but also *make it worse* when they prevail; and that is no full proof that a man had a *proper habit* of sin *before*, because by temptation he commits the act: For *Adam* sinned by temptation without an antecedent habit. 2. But we know the *nature* of man to

be

be *now corrupted*; and that this corruption is *virtually* or *seminally all sin*, disposing us to all; and that this disposition is strong enough to be called a *General Habit*. When *Grace* in the sanctified is called [*A Nature*] 2 Per. 1. 4. there is the same reason to call the *sinfull inclination* [*a Nature*] too; which can signifie nothing else then a *strong and rooted inclination*. Knowing therefore that the *Heart* is so corrupted, we may well say when the evil fruit appears, that there was the seed of it before. And the easie and frequent yielding to the temptation, shews there was a friend to sin within. 3. But if it were not so, yet that our *hearts* should be so *frail*, so *defectible*, *mutable*, and easily *drawn* to sin, is a part of *Self-knowledge* necessary to our preservation, and not to be disregarded. 4. I am sure Christ himself tells us, that *out of the heart proceed* the sins of the life, *Mat.* 15. 19. and that the *evil things* of *evil men* come out of the *evil treasure* of their *hearts*, *Mat.* 12. 36. And when God permitted the fall of good King *Hezekiah*, the text saith [*God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart*, 2 Chron. 32. 31. that is, that he might *shew* all that was in his heart, so that the weakness and the remaining

maining corruption of *Hezekiahs* heart were ſhewn in the ſin which he committed.

2. And as the ſinful *Inclinations* are hardly diſcerned, and long lie hid till ſome *Temptation* draw them out; ſo the *Act itſelf* is hardly diſcerned in any of its malignity, till it be *done and paſt*, and the ſoul is brought to a deliberate review. For while a man is *in the act of ſin*, either his *underſtanding* is ſo far deluded, as to think it *no ſin* in its kind, or none to him that then committeth it, or that its better venture on it then not, for the attaining of ſome ſeeming good, or the avoiding of ſome evil: or elſe the *reſtraining act* of the underſtanding is *ſuſpended*, and withdrawn; and it deſcerneth not practically the pernicious evil of the ſin, and *forbiddeth not* the committing of it, or forbids it ſo *remiſly* and with ſo low a voice, as is drowned by the clamour of *contradicting paſſion*: ſo that the prohibition is not heard. And how can it be then expected, that when a man hath not wit enough in uſe, to *ſee his ſin* ſo far as to *forbear it*, he ſhould even then *ſee it* ſo far as rightly to judge of himſelf and it? and that when Reaſon is low, and ſenſuality prevaileth, we ſhould then

then have the right use of Reason for self-discerning? When a storm of passion hath blown out the Light, and error hath extinguished it, we are unlikely then to know our selves. When the *sensual part* is pleasing it self with its fobidden objects, that *pleasure* so corrupts the judgement, that men will *easily believe* that it is *lawfull*, or that it is *not very bad*: So that sin is usually *least known* and *felt*, when it is *greatest* and *in exercise*, and one would think should then be *most perceptible*. Like a *phrensie* or *madness*, or other *deliration*, that is *least known* when it is *greatest* and *most in act*, because its *nature* is destructive to the *Reason* that should *know* it: Like a spot in the eye, that is it self unseen, and hindereth the sight of all things else. Or as the deeper a mans sleep is, the less he knoweth that he is a sleep. *Somnium narrare vigilantis est*, saith *Seneca*. Its men awake that tell their dreams.

And thus you see that through *self-ignorance* it comes to pass, that both *secret Habits*, and the most *open acts* of sin are oft-times little known. A man that is *drunk*, is in an unfit state to know *what drunkenness is*: and so is a man that is in his *passion*: You will hardly bring him to repentance

repentance till *it* be *allaid:* And so is a man in the brutifying heat of *lust:* or in the childish use of such *recreations* as he doteth on: or in the ambitious pursuit of his deluding honours: And therefore abundance of *unknown sin*, may remain in a soul that laboureth not to be *well acquainted with itself.*

And as I have shewed you this in *General*, both of *Habits* and *Acts* of sin, let us consider of some *Instances* in *particular*, which will yet more discover the necessity of *studying our selves.*

1. Little do we think what *odious and dangerous errors* may befall a person that *now is orthodox!* What a *slippery mutability* the *mind* of man is lyable unto! How variety of *representations* causeth variety of *apprehensions:* Like some pictures that seem one thing when you look on them on one side, and another thing when on another side; If you change your place, or change your light, they *seem* to change. Indeed *Gods Word* hath nothing in it thus fitted to deceive: but *our weakness* hath that which disposeth *us* to *mistakes*: We are like an *unlearned Judge*, that thinks the cause is good which he first hears pleaded for, till he hear the confutation by the other party, and then he

he thinks the other hath the beſt cauſe, till perhaps he hear both ſo long, till he know not whoſe cauſe is the beſt: The perſon that now is a *zealous lover* of the *Truth*, (when it hath procured entertainment by the happy advantage of friends, acquaintance, Miniſters, Magiſtrates, or common conſent being on its ſide) may poſſibly turn a *zealous adverſary* to it, when it *loſeth* thoſe advantages: when a *Miniſter* ſhall change his mind, how *many* of the *flock* may he miſlead?

When you *marry* or contract any *intimate friendſhip* with a perſon of unſound and dangerous principles, how eaſily are they received?

When the ſtream of the *times* and *authority* ſhall change, and put the name of Truth on falſhood, how many may be carried down the ſtream?

How zealous have many been for a *faithfull Miniſtry*, that have turned their *perſecutors*, or made it a great part of their Religion to revile them, when once they have turned to ſome Sect that is poſſeſt by the malicious ſpirit! (eſpecially the Papiſts and Quakers are famous for ſuch language of reproach: though the former excell the later much in the *ſlandering part*, and the later

excell in the open *bawling* and *incivility* of ſpeech.)

And O that we could ſtop *here*, and could not remember you how faithfully and honeſtly ſome have ſeemed to love and obey the *word of God*, and to delight in the *Communion of Saints*, that by ſeducers have been brought to deny the *divine authority of the Scriptures*, and to turn their backs on all *Gods publick Ordinances of Worſhip*, and excommunicate themſelves from the *Society of the Saints*, and vilifie or deny the works of the ſpirit in them! Little did theſe men once think themſelves, whither they ſhould fall, under the conceit of riſing higher: And little would they have believed him that had told them, what a change they would make. Had theſe men *known themſelves* in time, and known what Tinder and Gunpowder was in their hearts, they would have walkt more warily, and its like have ſcap't the ſnare: but they *fell into it*, becauſe they *feared it not*. And they *feared it not*, becauſe they *knew not* or *obſerved not*, how prone they were to be infected.

2. Little do many think in their *adverſity*, or *low eſtate*, what *ſeeds* are in their *hearts*, which *Proſperity* would turn into very

ry odious, scandalous sins, unless their vigilancy, and a special preservation do prevent it. Many a man that in his shop, or at his plough, is censuring the great miscarriages of his Superiors, doth little think how bad he might prove, if he were in the place of those he censureth. Many a *poor* man that freely talks against the Luxury, Pride and Cruelty of the *Rich*, doth little think how *like them* he should be, if he had *their temptations* and *estates*. How many persons that lived in good repute for humility, temperance and piety, have *We seen* turn *proud*, *and sensual* and *ungodly*, when they have been exalted! I would mention no mans case by way of insulting or reproach; but by way of compassion, and in order to their repentance that survive, I must say that this *age* hath given us such lamentable instances as should make all our hearts to ake and fear, when we consider the *crimes* and *their effects*. Would the persons that once walk't with us in the wayes of Peace and Concord, and Obedience, have believed that man that should have fore-told them twenty years ago, how many should be puffed up and deluded by *successes*, and make themselves believe by the ebullition of pride,

that *Victories authoriſed* them to *deny ſubjection* to the *higher powers*, and by right or wrong to take down all that ſtood in their way, and to take the Government into their own hands, and to depoſe their rightfull Governours? never once vouchſafing to ask themſelves the queſtion that Chriſt asked, Luke 12. 14. [*Man, who made me a Judge, or a divider over you?*] as if *authority* had been nothing but *ſtrength*, and he had the *beſt right* to *Govern* that could make the greateſt *force* to *compell* obedience. Little were the ſeeds of all this evil, *diſcerned* in the *heart*, before *proſperity* and *ſucceſs* did cheriſh them and bring them to that which with grief we have long obſerved. They would have ſaid as *Hazael*, *Am I a dog that I ſhould do this*? if one had told them before, that when God hath charged *every ſoul to be ſubject on pain of condemnation*, and they had *vowed fidelity*, they ſhould break *all theſe bonds* of *commands* and *vows*, and all becauſe they were *able to do it*: When they would not juſtifie him that ſhould do any *miſchief* to *themſelves*, and think it warrantable, becauſe he was *able*: when the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and their *deareſt friends* bore witneſs againſt the ſin, the heart could

not

not by all this be brought to perceive its guilt; or that it was any sin to *overturn, overturn, overturn,* till they had *overturned all,* and left not *themselves* a bough to stand upon: And how hardly to this *day*, do the *notable discoverings* of *God*, and the *plainness* of his *word*, and the continued *witness* of his *servants*, prevail for kindly true Repentance! The unrighteous usage of *Magistracy* and *Ministry*, and the licentious indulgence of the open enemies and revilers of both, and of all the Ordinances and Churches of the Lord, do proclaim aloud to all that that fear God [*The depths and deceits of the heart are wonderfull, and you little think what an hour of temptation may discover in you, or bring you to*: oh therefore *know your selves*, and *fear*, and *watch.*]

3. A man that in *adversity* is touched with *penitent* and *mortifying* considerations, and *strongly resolveth*, how holily and diligently he will live hereafter, if he be recovered or delivered from his suffering, doth ofttimes little think what a *treacherous heart* he hath, and how little he may retain of all this sense of sin or duty, when he *is delivered*, and that he will be so much worse then he seemed or promised, as that

he may have cauſe to wiſh he had been *afflicted ſtill.* O how many ſick-bed promiſes are as pious as we can deſire, that wither away and come to almoſt nothing, when health hath ſcattered the fears that cauſed them! How many with that great impriſoned Lord, do, as it were, write the ſtory of Chriſt upon their priſon walls, that forget him when they are ſet liberty! How many are *tender-conſcienced* in a *low eſtate*, that when they are *exalted*, and converſe with *great ones*, do think that they may waſt their time in idleneſs and needleſs, ſcandalous recreations, and be ſilent witneſſes of the moſt odious ſins from day to day; and *pray God be mercifull to them* when *they go to the houſe of Rimmon:* and dare ſcarcely own a down-right ſervant, or hated and reproached cauſe of God! O what a preſervative would it be to us in proſperity, to know the corruption of our hearts, and forſee in adverſity what we are in danger of! We ſhould then be leſs ambitious to place our dwellings on the *higheſt ground*; and more fearfull of the ſtorms that *there* muſt be expected. How few are there (to a wonder) that *grow better* by worldly greatneſs and proſperity? Yea how few that *hold their own*, and grow not

not *worse*? And yet how *few* are there (to a greater wonder) that *refuse*, or that *desire not* this perilous station, rather then to stand safer on the lower ground! Verily, the lamentable fruits of prosperity, and the mutability of men that make great professions and promises in adversity, should make the best of us jealous of our hearts, and convince us that there is greater corruption in them, then most are acquainted with, that are never put to such a trial. The height of prosperity shews what the man is indeed, as much as the depth of adversity.

Would one have thought that had read of *Hezekiahs* earnest prayer in his *sickness*, and the *Miracle* wrought to signifie his deliverance (2 *Kings* 20. 2, 3, 9.) and of his written song of praise, *Isa.* 38. that yet *Hezekiahs heart* should so deceive him, as to prove *unthankful*? You may see by his expressions his high *resolutions* to spend his life in the praise of God, Isa. 38. 19, 20. [*The living, the living he shall praise thee, as I do this day: The Fathers to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord!*] Would

you think that a *Holy man*, thus rapt up in Gods praise, should yet miscarry, and be charged with *ingratitude*? And yet in 2 *Chron.* 32. 25. it is said of him [*But* Hezekiah *rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon* Judah *and* Jerusalem.] And God was fain to bring him to a *review*, and *humble* him for being thus *lifted* up: as the next words shew, ver. 26. *Notwithstanding* Hezekiah *humbled himself for the pride of his heart.*] O Sirs, what Christian that ever was in a deep affliction, and hath been recovered by the tender hand of mercy, hath not found how *false* a thing the *heart* is, and how little to be *trusted* in its *best resolutions*, and most *confident promises*! *Hezekiah* still remained a holy faithfull man: but yet thus failed in particulars and degrees. Which of us can say, who have had the most *affecting* and *engaging* deliverances, that ever our hearts did *fully answer* the *purposes* and *promises* of our afflicted state! and that we had as *constant sensible thanksgivings after*, as our *complaints* and *prayers* were *before*! Not I; with grief I must say, Not I, though God hath tryed me many a time. Alas we are too like the deceitful

ceitfull Israelites, Psal. 78. 34. *When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and enquired early after God: and they remembred that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongues: For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant.* *Prosperity* oft shews more of the *hypocrisie* of the *unsound*, and the *infirmity* of the *upright*, then appeared in adversity. When we *feel* the *strong resolutions* of our hearts to cast off our sin, to walk more thankfully and fruitfully and accurately with God then we have done, we can *hardly believe* that ever *those hearts* shoul *lose* so much of those *affections* and *resolutions* as in a *little time* we find they do. Alas how quickly and insensibly do we slide into our former insensibility, and into our dull and heavy fruitless course, when once the *pain* and *fear* is gone! And then when the *next affliction* comes, we are *confounded* and covered with shame, and have not the confidence with God in our prayers and cryes as we had before, because we are conscious of our covenant-breaking and backsliding: and at last we grow so distrustfull

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of our hearts, that we know not how to believe *any promiſes* which they make, nor how to be confident of *any Evidence* of grace that is in them: and ſo we loſe the comfort of our ſincerity, and are caſt into a ſtate of *too much heavineſs* and unthankfull denyal of our deareſt mercies: And all this comes from the foul unexpected relapſes and coolings and declinings of the heart that comes not up to the promiſes we made to God in our diſtreſs.

But if *Exaltation* be added to *Deliverance*, how often doth it make the Reaſon drunk, ſo that the man ſeems not the ſame! If you ſee them drowned in Ambition or worldly cares or pleaſures; if you ſee how boldly they can play with the ſin that once they would have trembled at; how powerfull fleſhly arguments are with them; how ſtrangely they now look at plainhearted, zealous, heavenly Chriſtians, whoſe caſe they once deſired to be in; and how much they are aſhamed or afraid, to appear openly for an oppoſed cauſe of Chriſt, or openly to juſtifie the perſons that he juſtifieth: As if they had forgot that a day is coming when they will be loth that Chriſt ſhould be *aſhamed of them*, and refuſe to *juſtifie them*,

them, when the grand *Accuſer* is pleading for their *condemnation*. I ſay, if you ſee theſe men in their proſperity, would you not ask with wonder, Are theſe the men that lately in diſtreſs, did ſeem ſo humble, penitent and ſincere? that ſeemed ſo much above theſe vanities, that could ſpeak with ſo much contempt of all the glory and pleaſures of the world: and with ſo much pitty of thoſe vertiginous men, that they now admire.

O what pillars have been ſhaken by proſperity? what promiſes broken? what ſad eruptions of Pride and worldlineſs? What openings and ſad diſcoveries of heart, doth this alluring charming tryal make! And why is it that men *know not themſelves* when they are *exalted*, but becauſe they did not ſufficiently *know themſelves*, when they were *brought low*, nor ſuſpected enough the purpoſes and promiſes of their hearts, in the day of their diſtreſs!

4. We would little think, when the *Heart is warmed* and *raiſed* even to *Heaven*, in holy Ordinances, how *cold* it will grow again, and how *low* it will *fall* down? And when we have attained the cleareſt ſight of our *ſincerity*, we little think how quickly all ſuch ap-

apprehensions may be lost: and the misjudging soul, that reckons upon nothing but what it sees, or feels at present, may be at as great a loss, as if it had never perceived any fruits of the spirit, or lineaments of the Image of God upon it self. How *confident* upon good grounds is many an honest heart of its *sincerity*? How certain that it *desireth to be perfectly Holy*? 1. That it *would be rid of the nearest dearest sin.* 2. *That it loves the Saints,* 3. *That it loves the light of the most searching Ministry.* 4. And *loveth the most practical sanctifying truths.* 5. And *loves the Ministry and means that have the greatest and most powerfull tendency to make themselves more holy* (all which are certain evidences of sincerity.) How *clearly* may the *Heart* perceive *all these*, and write them down; and yet ere long have lost the sight and sense of them all, and find it self in darkness and confusion, and perhaps be perswaded that all is contrary with them! And when they read in their *Diary*, or Book of *Heart-accounts*, that at such a day in examination they found such or such an Evidence, and such a one at another, and many at a third, yet now they may be questioning whether all this were not deceit, because it seems

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contrary to their *present sight and feeling*! For it is *present light* that the mind discerneth by, and not by that which is *past and gone*, and of which we cannot so easily judge by looking back. They find in their Accounts, At such a time I had my soul enlarged in ptayer; and at such a time I was full of Joy, and at another time I had strong assurance, and boldness with God, and confidence of his love in Christ, and doubted not of the pardon of all my sins, or the Justification or acceptance of my person: But *now*, no Joy, no Assurance, no boldness, or confidence, or sense of Love and pardon doth appear; but the soul seemeth dead and carnal and unrenewed: As the same trees that in Summer are beautified with pleasant fruits and flowers, in Winter are deprived of their natural ornaments, and seem as dead, when the life is retired to the root. The soul that once would have defied the Accuser, if he had told him that he did *not Love the brethren, nor Love the sanctifying word and means*, nor *desire to be Holy*, and to be *free from sin*, is now as ready to *believe* the *accusation*, and will sooner believe the *tempter*, then the *Minister* that watcheth for them as one that must give account: Yea now

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it will turn the *Accuser* of *it self*, and say as Satan, and falsly charge it self with that which Christ will acquit it of. (And must Christ be put to *Justifie* us against *our selves*, as well as against *Satan?*) The same work that a well composed believer hath in confuting the calumnies of Satan, the same hath a Minister to do in confuting the false accusations of disturbed souls against themselves. And how subtile! how obstinate and tenacious are they! as if they had learned some of the *Accusers art*; such as the *uncharitable* and *malicious* are, against *their neighbours*, in picking quarrels with all that they say or do, in putting the worst construction upon all, in taking every thing in the most uncharitable sense, in aggravating the evil, & extenuating the good, in faining things against them that they are not guilty of, and denying or hiding all that is commendable; just such are poor disquieted souls against themselves: so unjust, and so censorious, as that if they dealt as ill by *others*, they would have the more cause for *some* of these accusations of *themselves*.

And there is not a soul so high in joy and sweet assurance, but is lyable to fall as low as this. And it makes our case to be much more grievous then otherwise it would be,

be, because we *know not our selves* in the hour of our *Consolations*, and think not how apt we are to lose all our joy, and what seeds of doubts and fears and grief are still within us, and what cause we have to expect a change. And therefore when so sad a change befalleth us, so contrary to our expectations, it surprizeth us with terror, and casteth the poor soul almost into despair. Then cryeth the distressed sinner, [*Did I ever think to see this day; Are my hopes and comforts come to this! Did I think so long that I was a child of God, and must I now perceive that he disowneth me! Did I draw near him as as my Father, and place my hope in his relief! and now must my mouth be stopt with unbelief, and must I look at him afar off, and pass by the doors of mercy with despair! Is all my sweet familiarity with the godly, and all my comfortable hours under the precious means of grace, now come to this?*] O how the poor soul here calls it self [*O vile apostate, miserable sinner! O that I had never lived to see this gloomy day! It had been better for me never to have known the way of righteousness, then thus to have relapsed; and have all the prayers that I have put up, and all the Sermons I have heard*

heard, and the books that I have read, to aggravate my ſin and miſery.] O how many a poor Chriſtian in this dark miſ-judgeing caſe, is ready with *Job, to curſe the day* that he was born, and to ſay of it, *Let it be darkneſs, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light ſhine upon it: Let it not be joyned to the dayes of the year: let it not come into the number of the moneths:—— Becauſe it ſhut not up the doors of the womb, and hid not ſorrow from mine eyes. Why dyed I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghoſt when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me, or why the breaſts that I ſhould ſuck? For now ſhould I have lain ſtill and been quiet —— Wherefore is light given to him that is in miſery and life unto the bitter in ſoul: which long for death, and it cometh not ———— which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave. Why is light given to a man whoſe way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in!* Job 3. Such are the lamentations of diſtreſſed ſouls that lately were as in the arms of Chriſt. Their lives are a burden to them; their food is bitter to them: their health is a ſickneſs to them: their liberty is as a priſon to them; their deareſt relations are become as ſtrangers; and all

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their comforts are turned into sorrows; and the world seems to them as a howling wilderness; and themselves as desolate forsaken souls. They are still as upon the Cross, and will own no titles, but *Vile, unworthy, lost, undone, forlorn* and *desolate*; As if they had learnt no words from Christ, but [*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

And much of this comes from the *Ignorance of our selves* in the time of *Peace* and *Consolation*. We are as *David*, Psal. 30.6,7. that saith [*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved: Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: But thou hidedst thy face and I was troubled.*] One frown of God, or withdrawing the light of his countenance from us, would quickly turn our day into night, and cover us with sack-cloth, and lay us in the dust.

Take warning therefore dear Christians, you that are yet in the Sun-shine of mercy, and were never at so sad a loss, nor put to groap in the darkness of mistake and terror. No man is so well in health, but must reckon on it that he *may be sick*. When you feel nothing but peace and quietness of mind, expect a stormy night

of fears, that may disquiet you: When you are feasting upon the sweet entertainments of your Fathers Love, consider that feasting is not like to be your ordinary dyet, but harder fare must be expected. Look on poor Christians in spiritual distress with compassion: hear their sad complaints, and the bills for Prayer which they here put up, and joyn in hearty prayer for them, and remember that this may prove your case. If you say, *To what purpose should you know before hand, how subject you are to this falling sickness?* I answer, Not to anticipate, or bring on your sorrows; but if it may be to *prevent* them: or if that may not be, at least to prevent the *extremity* and *terror*, and to be *provided* for such a storm. When you are now in health of body, and not disabled by melancholy or other corruptions of your fantasie, or passion, nor overwhelmed with the troubles of your mind, you have *leisure* calmly to understand the case of such mis-judging and distressed souls: and accordingly you may avoid the things that cause it: and you may be furnished with *right principles*, and with *promises*, and *experiences*, and *recorded evidences* of *grace*; and when comfort is withdrawn,

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you may by such *provision understand*, that *God changeth not*, nor breaks his *Covenant*, nor *abates* his *Love*, when your *apprehensions change*: And that this is no sign of a *forsaken soul*: and that the *ceasing* of our *feast*, and withdrawing of the table is not *a turning us out of the family*. *Expect* some *sicknesses*, and you will the better know the use of the Physicion, and will lay up *promises*, and prepare your *cordials*: and this will prove an exceeding ease, when the hour of your tryal comes.

And what I have said of the loss of *comfort*, may be said also of the diminished and interrupted operations of all *grace*. We little think in the vigor of our holy progress, what *falls* and *swoonings* and *languishings* we may find. When you have access with *boldness* in prayer unto God, and *lively affections* and *words* at will, and comfortable returns, remember that you may *come* to a sadder case; and that many a true Christian hath such withdrawings of the *Spirit of prayer*, as makes them think they are possessed with a *dumb devil*, and question whether ever they prayed acceptably at all, and cannot so much as observe the *groanings of the Spirit* in them, *Rom.* 8. 26.

When you are warm and vigorous in the work of God, and find delight in all the ordinances, remember that you are subject to such *sicknesses* as may take away your *appetite*, and make you say, I have no mind to hear, or read or pray: me thinks I feel no sweetness in them! I was wont to go up with comfort to the house of God: I was glad when the Lords Day was come, or nigh: It did me good to see the faces of the Saints: O the *meltings*, the *strivings*, the *lively workings* of soul that I have had in their sweet communion! when they have preached and prayed as full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: But now I do but *force* my self to duty: I go to prayer as against my will: I feel small relish in the word of life.] O how many Christians that little thought of such a day, cry out that *spiritual Death* is upon them: that they are *Dead* to *prayer*, and *dead* to *meditation*, and *dead* to *holy conference*: and that once they thought they were *dead to the world*, and now they find they are *dead to God*. Understand *before* that you are lyable to this, and you may do much to prevent it: and if you should fall into a sickness and loss of appetite, you may be able to difference it from death.

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When you are sweetly refreshed at the *Table* of the Lord, and have there received a *sealed pardon* as from Heaven into your bosoms, and have found *delightfull entertainment* with the Lord, remember that the day *may* come, when *dulness* and *unbelief* and *fears may* so prevail, as to make that an Ordinance of *greatest terror* to you, and you may sit there in trembling, lest you should eat and drink your own damnation: and you may go home in fears lest Satan have there taken possession of you, or lest it have sealed you up to wrath: or you may *fly from* that feast which is your *due*, and Christ invites you to, through fears lest it belong not to you, and should but harden you more in sin: For, alas, this *sad* and *sinfull* case, is too oft the case of *true believers*, that little feared it in their spiritual prosperity. So that the very *high expectations* of such workings of soul, which they cannot oft or ordinarily reach, and the frustrating of those expectations, doth so often turn the Table of the Lord into the bitterness of wormwood, into distracting fears and troubles, that I cannot tell whether any other part of worship occasion so much distress to many that are upright at the heart, as this

doth, which is appointed for their ſpecial conſolation.

So when you are clear and vigorous in the *Life of faith*, and can abhor all temptations to *unbelief*, and the beams of ſacred Verity in the Scriptures have ſhewed you that it is the undoubted word of God, and you have quietly bottomed your ſoul on Chriſt, and built your hopes upon his promiſes, and can with a cheerfull contempt let go the world for the accompliſhment of your hopes; remember yet that there is a *ſecret root* of *unbelief* remaining in you, and that this odious ſin is but imperfectly mortified in the beſt: and that its more then poſſible that you may ſee the day when the tempter will aſſault you with queſtionings of the word of God, and trouble you with the injections of blaſphemous thoughts, and doubts, whether it be true or not! and that you that have thought of God, of Chriſt, of Heaven, of the Immortal ſtate of ſouls, with joy, and ſatisfied confidence, may be in the dark about them, affrighted with ugly ſuggeſtions of the enemy, and may think of them all with troubleſome diſtracting doubts, and be forced to cry with the Diſciples, Luke 17. 5. *Lord increaſe*

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our faith: And as he Mark 9. 24. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* Yea worse then so: some upright souls have been so amazed and distracted by the Tempter, and their distempered hearts, as to think they do *not believe* at all, nor yet are able sincerely to say, Lord, help thou my unbelief.] When yet at that time, their *Fears* and their abstaining from iniquity shew, that they *Believe the Threatnings*, and therefore indeed *believe the word.* Now if we did but throughly *know our selves*, when faith is in its exercise and strength, and consider whither the secret seeds of remaining unbelief may bring us, being fore-warned, we should be fore-armed, and should fortifie our faith the better, and be provided against these sad assaults: And if the malignant spirit be suffered to storm this fortress of the soul, we should more manfully resist: and we should not be overwelmed with horror as soon as any hideous and blasphemous temptations do assault us; (when Christ himself was not exempted from the most blasphemous temptation even the worshipping of the Devil instead of God: though in him there was no sinfull dispositon to entertain it, *Mat.* 4. 9. 10. *John* 14. 30.)

O watch and pray, Christians, in your most prosperous and comfortable state! Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation: For you little think what is yet within you: and what advantage the deceiver hath, and how much of *your own* to take *his part*, and how low he may bring you both in point of *Grace* and *Peace*, though he cannot *damn* you.

I am troubled that I must tell you of so sad a case, that even the children of God may fall into, lest by troubling you with the opening of your danger, I should do any thing to bring you into it. But because *self-ignorance* and not being before hand acquainted with it, may do much more, I have timely shewed you the danger with the remedy.

5. Another instance of the darkness even of a Heart that in part is sanctified, is in the *successes of the temptations of Adversity*. When we *want nothing*, we think we value not the world, and we could bear the loss of all. But when *poverty* or *danger comes*, what trouble and unseemly whining is there, as if it were by a worldling that is deprived of his Idol, and all the portion that ever he must have. And by the shamefull moan and stir that we make for what

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we want, we shew more sinfull overvaluing of it, and love to it, then before we observed or would believe. O how *confidently* and *piously* have I heard some inveigh against the *Love of the world*, as if there had been no such thing *in them*; who yet have been so basely dejected, when they have been unexpectedly stript of their estates, as if they had been quite undone!

How patiently do we think we could bear affliction, till we *feel* it! And how easily and piously can we exhort *others* unto patience, when *we* have no *sense* of what they suffer! But when *our turn* is come, alas, we seem to be *other men*. *Suffering* is now *another thing*; and *Patience* harder then we imagined. And how inclinable are we to hearken to temptations, to use *sinfull means* to come out of our sufferings! Who would have thought that faithfull *Abraham* should have been so unbelieving as to equivocate in such a danger, and expose the chastity of his wife to hazzard, as we read in *Gen.* 12. 12, 13, 19.? And that he should fall into the same sin, again on the same occasion, *Gen.* 20. to *Abimelech*, as before he had done with *Pharaoh*! And that *Isaac* should after him fall into the same sin, in

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the same place! *Gen.* 26. 7. The Life of Faith doth set us so much above the fear of man, and shew us the weakness and nothingness of mortal worms, and the faithfulness and al-sufficiency of God, that one would think the frowns and threatnings of a man should *signifie nothing* to us, when *God* stands by, and giveth us such ample promises and security for our confirmation and encouragement: And yet what base dejectedness, and sinfull compliances are many brought to through the fear of man, that before the hour of this temptation, could talk as couragiously as any! This was the case of *Peter*, before mentioned: and of many a one that hath wounded conscience, and wronged their profession by too cowardly a dispostion: which if it were *fore-known*, we might do more for our confirmation, and should betake our selves in time to Christ in the use of means for strength. Few turn their backs on Christ, or a good cause in time of tryal, that *are jealous of themselves before hand*, and afraid lest they should forsake him: Few fall that are afraid of falling: But the self-ignorant and self-confident are careless of their way, and it is they that fall.

6. Ano-

6. Another instance that I may give you, is, in the *unexpected appearances of Pride in those that yet are truly humble. Humility* speaks in their *confessions*, aggravating their sin, and searching heart and life for matter of self-accusation: They call themselves *Less then the least of all Gods mercies:* They are ready with the woman of *Canaan*, *Mat.*15.27. even to own the name of *dogs*, and to confess themselves unworthy of the *childrens crums*, and unworthy to tread upon the common earth, or to breath in the air, or to live upon the patience and provisions of God: They will spend whole hours, and dayes of humiliation, in confessing their sin, and bewailing their weaknesses and want of grace, and lamenting their desert of misery: They are oft cast down so much *too low*, that they dare not own the title of *Gods children*, nor any of his special grace, but take themselves for meer unsanctified hardened sinners: and all that can be said will not convince them that they have any saving interest in Christ: nor hinder them from pouring out unjust accusations against themselves. And all this is done by them in the *uprightness* of their hearts, and *not dissemblingly*. And *yet* would you think, that

that with all this Humility, there should be *any pride*? and that the *same* persons should lift up themselves and resist their helps to further Humiliation? Do they think in their dejections, that it is in their hearts so much to exalt themselves? I confess many of them are sensible of their Pride, even to the increase of their *humility*: and as it is said of *Hezekiah*, do *humble themselves for the pride of their hearts, so that Gods wrath doth not come upon them*, 2 Chr. 32. 26. But yet too few are so well acquainted with the *power* and *rootedness* of this sin at the heart, and the workings of it in the hour of temptation, as they should be. Observe it but at such times as these, and you will see that break forth, that before appeared not. 1. When *we are undervalued* and *slighted*, and meaner persons preferred before us, and when *our words* and *judgements* are made light of, and our *parts* thought to be *poor* and *low*: when any blot of dishonour is cast upon us, deserved or undeserved; when we are slandered or reproached, and used with despight: what a matter do we make of it, and how much then doth our *Pride* appear in our distaste and offence, and impatience! so that the same person that can

pour

pour out words of blame and shame *against himself*, cannot bear *half* as much *from others* without displeasure and disquietness of mind. It would help us much to *know* this by our selves in the time of our *humility*, that we may be engaged to more watchfulness and resistance of our pride.

2. When we are *reproved* of any *disgracefull sin*, how hardly goes it down, and how many excuses have we? how seldom are we brought to downright penitent confessions? What secret distaste is apt to be rising in our hearts, against the reprover! And how seldom hath he that hearty thanks which so great a benefit deserves! And would any think in our humilations and large confessions unto God, that we were so proud! To *know* this by our selves, would make us more suspicious and ashamed to be guilty of it.

3. When any preferment or honour is to be given, or any work to be done that is a mark of dignity, how apt are we to think our selves as fit for it as any, and to be displeased, if the honour or employment do pass by us!

4. When we are admired, applauded, or excessively esteemed and loved, how apt are we to be too much pleased with it? which

which ſheweth a proud deſire to be ſome body in the world: and that there is much of this venom at the bottom in our hearts, even when we lay our ſelves in the duſt, and walk in ſackcloth, and paſs the heavieſt judgement on our ſelves.

7. Another inſtance of our *unacquaintedneſs with our hearts*, and the latent undiſcerned corruption of them, is, our *little diſcerning or bewailing thoſe ſecret maſter ſins, which lie at the root of all the reſt*, and are the life of the old man, and the cauſe of all the miſcarriages of our lives. As 1. *Unbelief* of the truth of the holy Scriptures, of the immortality of the ſoul, and the life of joy or miſery hereafter, and the other Articles of the Chriſtian faith: What abundance of Chriſtians are ſenſible of their *unbelief* as to the *applying acts* of faith that tend to their *aſſurance* of their own ſalvation, that are little ſenſible of any defect in the *Aſſenting act*, or of any ſecret root of unbelief about the truth of the Goſpel revelations: And yet, alas, it is *this* that weakeneth all our graces: It is *this* that feedeth all our wo! O happy men were we free from *this*! What *prayers* ſhould we put up! What *lives* ſhould we lead! how watch-

watchfully should we walk! with what contempt should we look on the allurements of the world! with what disdain should we think on fleshly lusts! with what indignation should we meet the tempter, and scorn his base unreasonable motions, if we did but *perfectly believe* the very *truth of the Gospel*, and *world to come!* How carefull and earnest should we be, to make our calling and election sure! How great a matter should we make of sin, and of helps and hinderances in the way to Heaven! How much should we prefer that state of life that furthereth our salvation, before that which strengtheneth our snares by furthering our prosperity and pleasure in the world, if we were not weak or wanting in our *belief* of the the *certain verity* of these things? Did we better know the badness of our hearts herein, it would engage us more in fortifying the vitals, and looking better to our foundation, and winding up this *spring* of *faith*, which must give life to all right motions of the soul.

2. How *insensible* are too many of the great imperfection of their *love to God!* What passionate complaints have we of their want of *sorrow* for their sin, and want of *memory*,

wory, and of *ability* to *pray*, *&c.* when their complaints for want of *Love to God*, and more *affecting knowledge of him*, are so cold and customary, as shews us they little observe the greatness of *this* sinfull want! *This* is the very *heart*, and *summ*, and *poyson* of *all* the sins of our soul and life. So much as a man *Loves God*, so much he is *Holy*: and so much he hath of the *spirit* and *image* of Jesus Christ: and so much he hath of *all saving graces*: and so much he will *abhor iniquity*, and so much he will *love* the *commands* of God. As *Love* is the *summ* of the *Law* and *Prophets*, so should it be the *summ* of *our care* and *study* through all our lives to excercise and strengthen it.

3. How little are most Christians troubled for want of *Love to men!* (to Brethren, neighbours and enemies) how cold are their complaints for their defects in *this*, in comparison of *other* of their complaints! But is there not cause of as deep humiliation for *this sin*, as almost any other? It seems to me that *want of Love* is one of the most prevalent diseases among us, when I hear it so little seriously lamented. I oft hear people say, O that we could *hear* more *attentively* and *affectionately*,

nately, and *pray* more *fervently*, and *weep* for sin more *plenteously*: But how seldom do I hear them say, O that we did *love our Brethren* more *ardently*, and *our Neighbours* and *Enemies* more *heartily* then we do, and set our selves to do them good! There is so little pains taken to bring the heart to the *Love* of *others*, and so few and cold requests put up for it, when yet the heart is backward to it, that makes me conclude that *Charity* is *weaker* in most of us then we observe. And indeed it appeareth so when it comes to *tryal*: to *that tryal* which Christ will judge it by at last, *Mat.* 25. When *Love* must be shewed by any *self-denyal*, or *costly demonstration*, by parting with *our food* and *rayment*, to supply the wants of *others*, and by *hazarding our selves* for them in their distress, *then* see how much we *Love indeed!* Good words cost little: so cheap an exercise of charity as is mentioned, Jam. 2. 15, 16. [*Depart in peace, be warmed, and filled*] is an insufficient evidence of the life of grace; and will do as little for the *soul* of the *giver*, as for the *Body* of the *receiver*. And how little hazardous or costly Love is found among us, either to *enemies*, *neighbours*, or to *Saints!* Did we better *know* our *hearts*, there would

be more *cure* and *diligence* uſed to bring them to *effectual fervent Love*, then to thoſe duties that are of leſs importance; and we ſhould learn what this meaneth, *I will have mercy and not ſacrifice*, Mat. 9.13. & 12. 7. which Chriſt ſets the Phariſees twice to learn. More inſtances of greateſt duties extenuated I might add, but I proceed.

8. Another inſtance of unobſerved corruption of the heart, is, *The frequent and ſecret inſinuations of ſelfiſhneſs in all that we do toward God or man:* When we think we are ſerving God alone, and have cleanſed our hearts from mixtures and deceit, before we are aware, *ſelf-intereſt*, or *ſelf-eſteem*, or *ſelf-conceit*, or *ſelf-love*, or *ſelf-will*, or *ſelf-ſeeking* do ſecretly creep in and marr the work. We think we are ſtudying and preaching, and writing purely for God, and the common good, or the benefit of ſouls; and perhaps little obſerve how ſubtilly ſelfiſhneſs inſinuates, and makes a party, and byaſſeth us from the holy ends, and the ſimplicity and ſincerity which we thought we had carefully maintained: ſo that we are ſtudying and preaching, and writing for *our ſelves*, when we take no notice of it.

When we enter upon any *office*, or deſire

re preferment, or riches, or honour in the
orld, we think we do it purely *for God*,
furnish us for *his service*, and little
ink how much of *selfishness* is in our de-
res.

When we are *doing Justice*, or *shewing*
ercy, in giving *alms*, or exhorting the un-
odly to repent, or doing any other work
f *Piety* or *Charity*, we little think how
uch of *selfishness* is secretly latent in the
ent and intention of the heart.

When we think we are defending the
uth and cause of God, by disput-
g, writing, or by the sword; or
hen we think we are faithfully main-
ining on one side *order* and *obedience*
gainst *confusion* and *turbulent disquiet spi-*
its, or the *Unity* of the Church against
vision; or on the other hand that we are
ncerely opposing Pharisaicall corruptions
nd hypocrisie, and tyrannie, and persecu-
on, and are defending the purity of Di-
ine worship, and the power and spirituali-
of religion; in all these cases we
ttle know how much of *carnal self*
ay be secretly unobserved in the work.

But above all others, Christ himself, and
he Holy Ghost that searcheth the hidden
ings of the heart, hath warned *one sort*

to be ſuſpicious of their hearts; and that is, thoſe that *cannot bear the diſſent and infirmities of their brethren in tolerable things*, and thoſe that are calling for fire from heaven, and are all for force and cruelty in religion; for vexing, impriſoning, baniſhing, burning, hanging, or otherwiſe doing as they would not be done by, proportionably in their own caſe. He tells his two Diſciples, in ſuch a caſe] *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of*, Luke 9.55. As if he ſhould ſay, *You think you purely ſeek my honour in the revenge of this contempt and oppoſition of unbelievers, and you think it would much redound to the propagation of the faith: and therefore you think that all this zeal is purely from my ſpirit: But you little know how much of a proud, a carnal, ſelfiſh ſpirit is in theſe deſires! You would fain have me and your ſelves with me to be openly vindicated by fire from heaven, and be ſo owned by God that all men may admire you, and you may exerciſe a dominion in the world; and you ſtick not at the ſufferings and ruine of theſe ſinners, ſo you may attain your end: but I tell you this ſelfiſh cruel ſpirit, is unlike my ſpirit which inclineth to patience, forbearance and compaſſion.*

So Rom. 14. 1, 2, &c. & 15. 1, 2. *Him hat is weak in the faith, receive ye —— who rt thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant? Why doſt thou judge thy brother, and why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? We ſhall ll ſtand before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt. —— Every one of us ſhall give account f himſelf to God —— We then that are trong, ought to bear the infirmities of the veak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves. Let very one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his ood to edification.* So Gal. 6. 1, 2. *Brehren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye vhich are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf leſt hou alſo be tempted. Bear ye one anothers urden, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt.*]

So alſo men are fouly and frequently niſtaken, when they are zealouſly contending againſt their faithfull Paſtors and their rethren, and vilifying others, and quenching love, and troubling the Church, upon retence of greater knowledge or integrity n themſelves: which is notably diſcovered nd vehemently preſt by the Apoſtle, *James* 3. 1, *&c.* where you may ſee how greatly he judgement of the ſpirit of God conerning our hearts doth differ from mens judgement of themſelves. They that

had a *maſterly, contentious, envious zeal,* did think they were of the *wiſer ſort* of Chriſtians, and of the *higheſt form* in the School of Chriſt; when yet the Holy Ghoſt telleth them that their wiſdom deſcended not from above, but was earthly, ſenſual and diveliſh, and that their envy and ſtrife doth bring confuſion, and every evil work: and that the wiſdom from above is neither *unholy* nor *contentious*, but *firſt pure, and then peaceable, gentle and eaſie to be entreated,* Jam. 3. 17.

You ſee then how oft and dangerouſly we are deceived, by unacquaintedneſs with our ſelves; and how *ſelfiſh carnal principles, ends* and *motives* are oft mixed in the actions which we think are the moſt excellent for *wiſdom, zeal,* and *piety* that ever we did perform. O therefore what cauſe have we to ſtudy, and ſearch, and watch ſuch hearts, and not too boldly or careleſly to truſt them!

And it is not *only Hypocrites* that are ſubject to theſe deceitfull ſins, who have them in dominion, but *true Believers* that have a remnant of this carnal ſelfiſh principle continually offering to inſinuate and corrupt their moſt excellent works, and even all that they do.

9. The

9. *The strong eruption of those passions that seemed to be quite mortified*, doth shew that there is more evil lurking in the *heart*, then ordinarily doth appear. How *calmly* do we *converse* together? how *mildly* do we speak? till some *provoking Word* or *wrong* do blow the coals, and then the *dove* appeareth to partake of a fiercer nature, and we can perceive that in the flame, which we perceived not in the spark. When a provocation can bring forth censorious, reviling, scornfull words, it shews what before was latent in the heart.

10. *We are very apt to think those affections to be purely spiritual, which in the issue appear to be mixed with carnality.* Our very love to the Assemblies and ordinances of worship, and to Ministers, and other servants of the Lord; to Books, and Knowledge; are ordinarily *mixt*; and *good* and bad are strangely complicate, and twisted together in the same affections and works. And the *Love* that beginneth in the *spirit*, is apt to *degenerate* into *carnal Love*, and to have too much respect to *Riches*, or *Honour*, or *personage*, or *birth*, or particular concernments of our own, and so it is corrupted, as Wine that turneth into Vinegar, before we are aware. And though still

there be *uprightneſs* of *heart*, yet too much *Hypocriſie* is joyned with it, when it is little perceived or ſuſpected.

And thus in *ten Inſtances* I have ſhewed you how much the ſervants of Chriſt themſelves may be miſtaken or unacquainted with their hearts; and how the work of mortification is hindered by this *covering* of ſo many *ſecret unobſerved* ſins.

But I muſt here deſire you to take heed of running into their extream, who hereupon conclude that their hearts being ſo dark and ſo deceitfull, are not at all to be underſtood; and therefore they are ſtill ſo ſuſpicious of the worſt, as that they will not be perſwaded of the grace that plainly worketh in them, and will condemn themſelves for that which they are not guilty of, upon ſuſpicion that they may be guilty and not know it: and think that all the ſin that they forbear, is but for want of a Temptation; and that if they had the *ſame Temptations*, they ſhould be as bad as any others.

I would intreat theſe perſons to conſider of theſe truths, for their better information. 1. Temptations do not only *ſhew* the evil that is in the heart, but *breed much more*, and turn a *ſpark* into a *flame*; as the ſtriking

striking of the steel upon the flint doth by the *collision* and *tinder*, make fire where was none. *Adam* was *made* a sinner by temptation.

2. There is *no Christian so* mortified, but hath such remnants of corruption and concupiscence as would quickly bring forth heynous sins, if *Temptations beyond strength* were let loose upon him. What need you more proof then the sad instances of *Noah*, *Lot*, *David*, *Solomon* and *Peter*? It did not prove that any of these were *graceless hypocrites before*, because they fell so foully by Temptations. And yet these Objectors think *they* are *graceless*, because some strong Temptation *might* make them fall.

3. It is not *Gods way of saving men*, to give them *so much inward Grace* as *no Temptation* can overcome, but to preserve and bring them safe to heaven, by *moral sapiential conduct*, together with internal changes of their hearts. And therefore he *keepeth* men *from sin*, by *keeping them* from *Temptations* that are *too strong* for them. All humane strength is limited. And there are none on earth have such a measure of grace, but a Temptation may be imagined so strong as to overcome them. And if God

God ſhould let Satan do his worſt, there muſt be extraordinary aſſiſtances to preſerve us, or we ſhould fall. Bleſs God if he *lead you not into Temptation*, but *deliver you from the Evil*, by keeping you far enough from the ſnare. This is the way of preſervation that we are taught to pray and hope for.

4. And therefore it is our own duty to keep as *far from Temptations* as we can; and if we have *Grace to avoid the ſin by avoiding the Temptation*, we have *ſuch Grace* as God uſeth for the ſaving of his own: Not that he *hath ſaving grace* that would live wickedly if he were but tempted to it by thoſe *ordinary tryals* that humane nature may expect: But the ſoul that preferreth *God and Glory* before the *pleaſures* of ſin for a ſeaſon, if it ſo continue, ſhall be ſaved, though poſſibly there *migh have been* a *Temptation* ſo ſtrong as would have conquered the meaſure of grace that he had, if it had not been fortified with *new ſupplies*. It is therefore more dotage in thoſe that could find in their hearts to *put themſelves* upon *ſome Temptation*, to try whether they are *ſincere* by the *ſucceſs*. Avoid *temptation*, that you may avoid the *ſin* and *puniſhment*. *Make* not your ſelves *worſe* on pre-

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tence

tence of *discovering* how *bad* you are. Put not Gunpowder or fuell to the sparks of corruption that still remain in you, on pretence of trying whether they will burn. All men are *defectible*, and *capable* of every sin, and must be saved from it by that Grace which worketh on nature according to that nature, and prevaileth with Reason by means agreeable to Reason. If we think we *are wicked*, because we find that we have hearts that *could be wicked*, were they let alone, and because we are not removed so *far* from sin as to be *uncapable* of it, we may as well say *Adam* was wicked in his innocency: much more *David*, *Solomon* and *Peter* before their falls. It is not he that *Can sin* that shall be punished: but he that *doth sin*, or *would sin if he could*, and had *rather* have the sin for its *Pleasure* or *Commodity* to the *flesh*, then be *free* from it, and be *Holy*, in order to salvation, and the favour and pleasing and enjoying of God in endless Glory.

5. Lastly, Let such persons try themselves by their conquest over the Temptations *which they have*, and not by imaginary conflicts with all that they think *may possibly* at any time assault them. You have still the same flesh to deal with, and the same world and

Devil

devil that will not let you go to heaven without Temptation: If the Temptations which you have already, keep you not from preferring the Love and fruition of God before the Pleasure of the Flesh; and a life of faith and Holiness, before a life of infidelity and impiety and sensuality, so that you had rather live the former then the latter, I am sure then your Temptations have not kept you from a state of grace. And you may be assured, that for the time to come, if you watch and pray, you may escape the danger of temptation; and that God will increase your strength if he increase your tryals: Be not secure, be you never so *Holy:* Think not that you have nature that *cannot* sin, or cannot be tempted to a love of sin: But *let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is moderate, or common to man: but God is faithfull, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. 10. 13.

And thus I have shewed you how *self-ignorance* hindereth the conquest and mortifying of sin, even in the Godly, and now shall add some further motives.

2. Not

2. Not knowing our selves, and the secret corruptions of our hearts, doth *make sin surprize us the more dangerously*, and break forth the more *shamefully*, and wound our consciences the more terribly. The unsuspected sin hath left opposition, and when it breaks out doth like an unobserved fire, go far before we are awakened to quench it. And it confoundeth us with shame, to find our selves so much worse then we imagined. It overwhelmeth the soul with despairing thoughts to find it self *so bad*, when it thought it had been *better*. It breedeth endless suspicions and fears, when we find our former opinions of our selves confuted, and that contrary to our expectations we are surprized where we thought we had been safe: we are still ready to think what ever we discern that is good within us, that we may as well be mistaken *now* as we were *before*. And thus our present *self-ignorance* when discovered, may hinder all the comforts of our lives.

3. Lastly, not *knowing our selves*, and our particular sins and wants, and weaknesses, doth keep us from a particular application of the promises, and from seeking those particular Remedies from Christ, which our case requireth: and so our mercies

cies lie by neglected, while we need them and do not underſtand our need.

And thus I have ſhewed you why you ſhould labour to know your ſinfulneſs.

II. I am next to perſwade *Believers* to *know* their *Graces* and their *happineſs*. *Good* is the object of *voluntary knowledge*: but *Evil* of *forced involuntary knowledge*, unleſs as the *knowledge* of *evil* tendeth to ſome *Good*. Therefore methinks you ſhould be readyeſt to *this part* of the ſtudy of your ſelves. And yet, alas, the *preſumptuous* are not more unwilling to know their ſin and miſery, then ſome *perplexed Chriſtians* are backward to acknowledge their Grace and Happineſs. How hard is it to convince them of the tender love of *God* towards them, and of the ſincerity of *their Love* to him? and to make them believe that they are *dear to God* when they *loath themſelves!* how hard is it to perſwade them that the Riches of Chriſt, the promiſes of the Goſpel, and the Inheritance of the Saints, belong to them! And the Reaſons among others are principally theſe.

1. The *remnants of ſin* are ſo *great*, and ſo *active* and *troubleſome*, as that the *feeling* of theſe *contrary* diſpoſitions doth hinder them

them from observing the operations of grace. It is not easie to discern the sincerity of *Faith* among so much *unbelief*, or the sincerity of *Love* where there is so much *averseness* : or of *Humility* where there is so much *pride* : or of *Repentance* and *Mortification*, where there is so much *Concupiscence* and inclination to sin : Especially when grace by its enmity to sin doth make the soul so suspicious and sensible of it, as that the observation of it turns their mind from the observation of the contrary *good* that is in them. Health is not observed in other parts, when the feeling of the stone, or but a tooth-ache takes us up. The *thoughts* are called all to the *part affected*; And *sickness* and *wounds* are felt more sensibly then *Health*. The *fears* of misery by sin, are *easilyer excited*, and are more *passionate*, then *Love* and *Hope*, and all the affections that are imployed in the prosecution of *good*. And in the midst of *Fears* it is hard to *feel* the matter of our *Joyes*. *Fear* is a tyrant if it exceed, and will not permit us to believe or observe the *cause* of *Hope*. *Quod nimis metuunt miseri, hoc facile credunt, & nunquam amoveri putant*, saith *Seneca*, *What we too much fear, we too easily believe, and hardly believe that it is gone,*

gone, and the danger paſt. Theſe *fears* are uſefull to our *preſervation*: but they too often pervert our judgements, and hinder our due *conſolation*. *Qui inſidias timet, in nullas incidet: nec cito perit ruina, qui ruinam timet. Semper metuendo ſapiens vitat malum*, ſaith *Seneca*. *He that feareth ſnares, doth not fall into them: Nor doth he quickly periſh by ruine, that feareth ruine: A wiſe man eſcapeth evil by alwayes fearing it.*] And the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, Prov. 28. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth alwayes, but he that hardeneth his heart ſhall fall into miſchief.*]

Moderate Fears then are given to *Believers* for their neceſſary *preſervation*, that walking among enemies and ſnares, they may take heed and ſcape them. But when this paſſion doth *exceed*, it *abuſeth* us, and drowns the voice of *Reaſon*: It maketh us believe that every *temptation* is a *ſin*, and every *ſin* is ſuch as cannot ſtand with grace, and will hardly ever be pardoned by Chriſt. Every ſin againſt *knowledge* and *conſcience*, doth ſeem *almoſt unpardonable*: and if were *deliberate after profeſſion* of religion, it ſeems to be the *ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. As children and other frightfull perſons that fear the *Devil* by way of *Apparitions*, do think in the dark he is ready

to

to lay hold on them, and they look when they see him: so the *fearful Christian*, as is still thinking that thing he feareth is upon him, or coming upon him. The *fear* of an *unregenerate unpardoned* state, doth make him think he is *in it*; and the *fear* of the *wrath of God* doth make him think that he is *under it*; and the *fear* of *damnation* makes him imagine he *shall be damned*. It is wonderfull hard in a *frightfull state*, or indeed in *any passion* that is *strong*, to have the *free use* of *Judgement* for the knowing of our selves, and to discern any grace, or evidence or mercy, which is *contrary* to our *fears*; Especially when the *Feeling* of much corruption, doth turn our eyes from the observation of the good, and we are still taken up with the matter of our disease.

2. Another cause that we *hardly know* our *Graces*, is, because *they* are *weak and small*; and therefore in the midst of so much corruption are oft-times hardly discerned from *none*. A *little faith* even as a *grain of mustard seed*, may *save* us: A *little Love* to God that is sincere, will be *accepted*; and *weak Desires* may be *fulfilled*: But they are frequently *undiscerned*, or their sincerity *questioned* by those that have them; and therefore bring but *little*

comfort. Peters *Little faith* did keep him from *drowning*, but not from *doubting* and *fearing* he ſhould be drowned, nor from beginning to ſink, Mat. 14. 29, 30, 31. *He walked on the water to go to Jeſus; but when he ſaw the wind boiſterous he was afraid, and beginning to ſink, he cryed ſaying, Lord ſave me. And immediately Jeſus ſtretched forth his hand and caught him, and ſaid unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt!*] So the *Little faith* of the Diſciples kept them from *periſhing*, but not from their *fear* of *periſhing*, Mat. 8. 24, 25, 26. *When a great tempeſt aroſe, ſo that the ſhip was covered with waves, they cry, Lord ſave us, we periſh: and he ſaith to them, Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith? The little faith of the ſame Diſciples entitled them to the Fatherly protection and proviſion of God: but it kept them not from ſinfull cares and fears, about what they ſhould eat or drink, or wherewith they ſhould be cloathed, as is intimated in* Mat. 6. 25, 28, 30. *Take no thought for your life, what you ſhall eat, or drink, or for your body what you ſhall put on —— Why take ye thought for rayment? —— If God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven, ſhall he not much*

much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? So in *Mat.* 16. 7, 8. The *seed* that Christ likeneth his *kingdom* to, *Mat.* 13. 31. hath *life* while it is buried in the earth, and is *visible* while a *little seed*; but is not *so observed* as when it cometh to be as a tree. Though God *despise not the day of little things*, Zech. 4. 10. and though he *will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoaking flax*, Isa. 42. 3. yet *our selves* or *others* cannot *discern* and *value* these obscure beginnings, as *God* doth. But because we cannot easily *find a little faith* and a *little Love* when we are looking for it, we take the *non-appearance* for a *non-existence*, and call it *none*.

3. Sanctification is oft *unknown* to those that have it, because they *do not try and judge themselves by sure infallible Marks, the Essentials of the new man*; *but by uncertain qualifications, that are mutable, and belong but to the beauty and activity of the soul.*

The *Essence* of Holiness as denominated from the *object*, is the *Consent* to the *three Articles of the Covenant of Grace.* 1. *That we give up our selves to God as our God and Reconciled Father in Jesus Christ.* 2. *That we give up our selves to Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Saviour, to recover us, reconcile us and bring us unto God.* 3. *That we*

give up our selves to the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, to guide and illuminate us, and perfect the Image of God upon us, and prepare us for Glory.

The *Essence* of Sanctification as denominated from its *opposite objects*, is nothing but our Renunciation and Rejection of the *flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*, of *Pleasures*, *Profits* and *Honours*, as they would be *preferred before God*, and draw us to forsake him.

The *Essence* of Sanctification as denominated from *our Faculties* which are the *subject* of it, is nothing but this *preferring of God, and Grace, and Glory* above the said *Pleasures, Profits* and *Honours*. 1. By the *Estimation of our Understandings:* 2. By the *Resolved habituate Choice of our Wills.* 3. And in *the bent and drift of our Endeavours* in our Conversations. In these *three Acts*, as *upon the first three objects*, and *against the other three objects*, lyeth *all* that is *Essential* to *Sanctification*, and that we should judge of our sincerity, and title to salvation by, as I before shewed.

But *besides these* there are many *desireable qualities* and *gifts*, which we may seek for, and be thankfull for; but are not *Essential* to our *Sanctification*. Such are

1. The

1. The *knowledge* of *other Truths* besides the *Essentials* of *Faith* and *duty*; and the *soundness* of *judgement* and freedom from *error* in these *lesser* points.

2. A *strong memory* to carry away the things that we read and hear.

3. A *right order* of our *Thoughts*, when we can keep them from Confusion, roving and distraction.

4. *Freedom* from *too strong affections* about the creatures, and from disturbing *passions*.

5. *Lively Affections and feeling operations* of the soul towards God, in holy duty: and tender *meltings* of the heart for *sin*: which are very *desireable*, but depend so much on the *temperature* of the *body*, and *outward accidents*, and are but the *vigor* and not the *Life* and *being* of the new creature, that we must not *judge* of our *sincerity* by them. *Some* Christians scarce know what any such *lively feelings* are: and *some* have them very *seldom*, and I think, *no one*, *constantly*: and therefore if our *Peace*, or *Judgement* of *our selves*, be laid on *these*, we shall be still wavering and unsetled, and tost up and down as the waves of the sea; Sometimes seeming to be almost in Heaven, and presently near the gates of Hell: When

our *state* doth not change at all as these *feelings* and *Affectionate* motions of the soul do; but we are still in our *safe Relation to God*, while our *first Essential graces* do continue; though our failings, dulness, weaknesses and wants, must be matter of *moderate filial humiliation* to us.

6. The same must be said of all *common Gifts, of utterance* in conference or prayer, and of quickness of understanding and such like.

7. Lastly, the same must be said also of all *that rectitude of life, and those degrees of obedience* that are *above meer sincerity*: in which *one true Christian* doth *exceed* another; and in which we should all *desire* to *abound*; but must not judge our selves to be *unsanctified* meerly because we are *imperfect*; or to be *unjustified sinners*, meerly because we are *sinners*.

In our judging of our selves by our *Lives* and *Practices* two *extreams* must be carefully avoided: On the left hand that of the *Prophane*, and of the *Antinomians*; The former cannot distinguish between sinners and *sinners*, *sanctified* and *unsanctified*, Justified and unjustified *sinners*; and when they have once conceited that they are in the favour of God, whatever they

do,

do, they say, *we are but sinners, and so are the best.* The latter teach men, that when once they are justified, they are not for any sins to doubt again of their Justified state, lest they should seem to make God changeable.

On the *other hand* must be avoided this *extream* of perplexed doubting Christians, that make *all their sins*, or *too many of them*, to be matter of *doubting*, which should be but matter of *humiliation.*

I know it is a very great difficulty that hath long perplexed the Doctors of the Church, to define *what sins are consistent, and what inconsistent with a state of Holiness and Salvation*, (which if any distinguish by the names of *Mortal* and *Venial*, taking the words in no other sense, I shall not quarrell with them.) At the present I shall say but this for the resolving of this great and weighty question.

1. It is not the bare *Act of sin in it self* considered, that must determine the case: but the *Act* compared with the *Life of Grace*, and with *true Repentance.* Whoever hath the *Love of God* and *Life of Grace*, is in a state of Salvation: And therefore whatever sin consisteth with the fore-described *Essentials* of *Sanctification*, (viz. *The Ha-*

bitual devotion of the soul to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the Habitual renunciation of the Flesh, the World and Devil) consisteth with a state of life. And *true Repentance* proveth the pardon of all sin: And therefore whatever sin consisteth with *Habitual Repentance*, (which is *the Hatred of sin as sin*,) and hath *Actual Repentance* when it is *observed*, and there is *time of deliberation*, consisteth with a *state* of Grace. Now in *Habitual Conversion* or *Repentance*, the *Habitual Willingness* to *leave* our sins, must be more then our *sinfull Habitual Willingness* to keep it. Now you may by this, much discern as to *particular acts*, whether they are consistent with *Habitual hatred of sin*. For *some* sins are so much in the *power* of the *will*, that he that hath an *Habitual hatred* of them, cannot *frequently commit them*; And *some* sins are also of so *heynous* a *nature* or *degree*, that he that *Habitually hateth sin*, cannot *frequently* commit them: nor *at all*, while his *Hatred* to them is *in Act*: And he that *truly Repenteth* of them, cannot *frequently return* to them: because that sheweth that *Repentance was* indeed either but *Superficial*, or *not Habitual*. But *some* sins are not so *great* and *heynous*, and therefore do not

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so much *deterr* the soul, and some are not so *fully* in the *power* of a *sanctified will* (as *passions*, *thoughts*, &c.) and therefore may *after* be committed in consistency with *Habitual Repentance* or *Hatred* of sin. To examine particulars, would be tedious and digressive. *offer*

2. And I must further answer, that our *safety*, and consequently our *Peace* and *comfort* lieth in *flying as far* from sin as we can: And therefore he that *will sin* as much as will consist with *any sparks* of *Grace*, shall *bury* those *sparks* by his *sin*, and shall *not know* that he hath *any Grace*, nor have the *comfort* of it; as being in a condition *unfit* for *Actual assurance* and *comfort* till he be brought to *Actual Repentance* and *amendment*.

Thus I have shewed you, by what you must try your sanctification, if you will know it: which I before proved to you from Scripture: and further may do, when the occasion will excuse me from the imputation of disproportion and unseasonableness, in repeating the proofs of all that we speak in Explication or Application of the principal point.

4. Another cause that many Christians are *ignorant* of their *state of Grace*, is their

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looking so much at what they should be, and what others are that have a high degree of grace, and what is commanded as our duty, that they *observe not* what they *have already*, because it is short of what they *ought* to have. We are thus too much about *outward mercies* too. We *mourn* more for *one friend* that is *dead*, then we *rejoyce* in *many* that are *alive*: We are more *troubled* for *one mercy* taken from us, then *comforted* in *many* that are left us. We observe our *diseases* and our *sores* more *sensibly* then our *health*. *David* for *one Absalon* is so afflicted that he wished he had *dyed for him*, though a *rebell!* when his comfort in *Solomon* and his other children is laid aside. As all the humours flow to the pained place, so do our *thoughts* as was aforesaid, and so we overlook the matter of our comfort.

5. And it very much hindereth the *knowledge* of our *Graces*, that we *search upon so great disadvantages as hinder a true discovery*. Among many others, I will instance but in *two* or *three*. 1. We *surprize our souls* with *sudden questions*, and look for a *full* and *satisfactory* answer, before we can well *recollect* our selves, and call up our evidences; and we expect to know the

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summ or *product*, before our consciences have had leisure deliberately to cast up their accounts. Yea when we *have* set to it, and by diligent search with the best assistances, have *discovered our sincerity*, and *recorded* the *judgement*, if Conscience cannot *presently* recall its proofs, and make it out upon every surprize, we unjustly question all that is past, and will *never rest* in any judgement, but are still calling over all again, as if the cause had never been tryed. And then the judgement passeth according to our *present temper* and *disposition*, when many of the *Circumstances* are forgotten, and many of the *witnesses* are out of the way, that last assisted us.

2. Perhaps we judge (as I said before) in the fit of a *passion*, of *fear* or *grief*, which imperiously over-ruleth or disturbeth *reason*. And then no wonder if in our haste we say that all men that would comfort us are lyars. And if with *David*, *Psal.* 77. 2, 3, 7, 8, 9. in the *day of* our *trouble*, *our souls do even refuse to be comforted*, and if we *remember God and are troubled more*, and if our *spirit be overwhelmed in us: when he holdeth our eyes waking, and we are so troubled that we cannot speak*: and if we question whether *the Lord will cast off for ever, and*

will

will be favourable no more: whether *his mercy be clean gone for ever, and his promiſe fail for evermore*? Whether *he hath forgotten to be gracious, and hath ſhut up his tender mercies in diſpleaſure*? till a calm deliver us from the miſtake, and make us ſay, [*This is our infirmity*] We think that God doth *caſt off* our ſouls, and *hideth his face from us*; when *our ſoul is full of troubles, and our life draweth nigh unto the grave*; *When we are afflicted and ready to die from our youth up, and are diſtracted, while we ſuffer the terrors of the Lord:* as he complaineth *Pſalm* 88. 3. 14, 15, 16. *Paſſion* judgeth according to *its nature*, and not according to *truth*.

3. Or perhaps we judge, when our *friends*, our *memory* and other *helps* are out of the way, and we are deſtitute of due aſſiſtance.

4. Or when our *Bodies* are *weak* or *diſtempered* with *Melancholy*, which repreſenteth all this in black and terrible colours to the ſoul, and will hear no language but [*forſaken, miſerable, annd undone.*] You may as well take the judgement of a man *half drunk*, or *half aſleep*, about the greateſt matters of your lives, as to take the judgement of *Conſcience* in ſuch a ſtate of

diſ-

disadvantage, about the condition of your souls.

6. Another hinderance to us is, that *we cannot take comfort from the former sight of grace that we have had, unless we have a continued present sight.* And so all our *labour* in *trying*, and all our *experiences*, and all *Gods former manifestations* of himself to the soul are *lost*, as to our *present comfort*, when our Grace is out of *sight*. Like foolish travellers that think they are out of the way, and are ready to turn back, when ever any hill doth interpose, and hinder them from *seeing* the place they go to. As if it were no matter of *comfort* to us, to say, I did find the Evidences of Grace: I once recorded a judgement of my sincerity: But the *former* is still *questioned* rather then the *later*. When with *David* we should *consider the dayes of old, the years of antient times, and call to remembrance our songs in the night, and commune with our hearts in such a diligent search*, and remembrance of the mercies formerly received, *Psal.*77. 5, 6, 7.

7. Lastly, the *operations of mans soul* are *naturally* so *various*, and from corruption are so *confused* and so *dark*, that we are oft-times in a maze and at a loss, when we

we are *moſt deſirous* to judge aright: and ſcarce *know where* in ſo great *diſorder* to find any thing that we ſeek; and *know it not* when we *find* it: ſo that our hearts are almoſt as ſtrange to *themſelves* as to *one another*; and ſometime *more confident* of *other* mens ſincerity then our *own*, where there is no more matter for our confidence.

HAving thus ſhewed you the *Cauſes* of our *Ignorance* of our Sanctification; I ſhall briefly tell you ſome *Reaſons* that ſhould *move* you to ſeek to be acquainted with it, where it is.

1. The knowledge of *God* is the moſt excellent knowledge: and therefore the beſt ſort of creature knowledge is, that which hath the *moſt of God* in it. And undoubtedly there is *more of God* in *Holineſs* which is his *Image*, then in common things. *Sins* and *wants* have *nothing* of God in them: They muſt be fathered on the *Devil* and *your ſelves*. And therefore the knowledge of them is good but by *Accident*; becauſe the *knowledge even* of evil, hath a *tendency* to *good*. And therefore it is commanded and made our duty, for the *good* which it *tendeth* to. It is the *Divine nature*, and *Image* within you which

which hath the *most of God*; and therefore to know this, is the high and noble knowledge. To know *Christ within us*, is our happiness on *earth*, in order to the knowledge of him in *Glory face to face*, which is the happiness of *heaven*. To *know God* though *darkly through a glass*, and *but in part*, (1 *Cor.* 13. 12.) is far above all *creature knowledge*. The knowledge of *him* raiseth, quickneth, sanctifieth, enlargeth and advanceth all our faculties. It is *life eternal to know God in Christ*, *John* 17. 3. Therefore where *God* appeareth *most*, there should our understandings be *most* diligently exercised in study and observation.

2. It is a most *delightfull felicitating knowledge*, to *know that Christ is in you*. If it be *delightfull* to the *Rich* to see their *wealth*, their houses, and lands and goods and money: and if it be *delightfull* to the *Honourable* to see their attendance, and hear their own commendations and applause; how *delightfull* must it be to a true *Believer* to find *Christ within him*, and to know his title to eternal life? If the knowledge of *full barns*, and *much goods laid up for many years*, can make a sensual worldling say, *Soul take thy ease, eat, drink*

and

and be merry, *Luke* 12. 19, 20. Me thinks the *knowledge* of our interest in *Christ and heaven*, should make us say, [*Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more then in the time that their corn and wine increased*, (that is, more then corn and wine could put into theirs) Psal. 4. 7. [*Return unto thy Rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*, Psal. 116. 7.] If we say with *David*, [*Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praysing thee*,] Psal. 84. 4. much more may we say, [*Blessed* are they in whom *Christ dwelleth*, and the *Holy Ghost* hath made his *Temple:*] *they should be still praising thee*, [*Blessed is the man whom thou chooseſt, and causeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy Temple*, Psal. 65. 4. But this is upon supposition, that he be *first Blessed by Christs approach to him*, and *dwelling in him*.

If you ask, *How it is that Christ dwelleth in us*; I answer, 1. *Objectively*, as he is apprehended by our *Faith* and *Love*: As the things or persons that we *think of*, and *Love* and *delight* in, are said to *dwell* in our *minds* or *hearts*. 2. By the *Holy Ghost*, who as a principle of *new* and *heavenly Life*, is given by Christ the *Head* unto his *members*;

and

and as the *Agent of Christ* doth illuminate, sanctifie and guide the soul. [*He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, 1 Joh. 3. 24. That of *Eph.* 3. 17. may be taken in either, or both senses comprehensively, *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*]

3. Did you know that Christ is in you by his spirit, *it might make every place and condition comfortable to you!* If you are *alone*, it may rejoyce you to think what *company dwelleth* continually with you in your *hearts.* If you are *wearied* with *evil company without*, it may comfort you to think that you have *better within*; when you have *communion* with the *Saints*, it is your joy to think that you have *nearer communion with the Lords of Saints.* You may well say with *David*, Psal. 139. 18. [*when I awake I am still with thee.*] Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

4. Did you know Christ within you, it *would much help you in believing what is written of him in the Gospel.* Though to the ungodly the mysteries of the Kingdom of God do seem incredible: yet when you

have *experience* of the *power* of it on your *souls*, and find the *Image* of it on your *hearts*, and the *same Christ within* you conforming you to what he commandeth in his word, this will work such a *suitableness* to the *Gospel* in your *hearts*, as will make the work of faith more easie. Saith the Apostle, 1 Joh. 4. 14, 16. [*We have seen & do testifie that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world* (there's their outward experience) *And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us: God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*: (There is their Faith confirmed by their inward evidence: No wonder if they that have God dwelling in them by holy love, do believe the love that God hath to them.) This is the great advantage that the *sanctified* have in the *work of faith* above those that much excell them in *disputing*, and are furnished with more *Arguments* for the Christian verity; Christ hath his witness abiding in them. The *fruits of the spirit bear witness* to the *incorruptible seed, the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. The *impress* on the *heart* bears witness to the *seal* that caused it. And it is not a weak & uneffectual Argument for the Truth of the Gospel that *Believers* use to fetch

fetch from *within*, when they plead the effects of it on their souls. Labour to know the *Truth* of your *sanctification*, that you may be *confirmed* by it in the *Truth* of the *word* that *sanctifieth* you, *Joh.* 17. 17. and may *rejoice in him that hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth*, 2 Thes. 2. 13.

5. If you can come to the knowledge of Christ within you, it will be *much the easier to you to trust upon him, and fly to him in all your particular necessities*, and to make use of his Mediatorship with holy confidence. When others flie from Christ with trembling, and know not whether he will speak for them, or help them, or have any regard to them, but look at him with strange and doubtful thoughts, it will be otherwise with you that have *assurance* of his continual Love and presence. *Nearness* breedeth *familiarity*, and overcometh strangness: *Familiarity* breedeth *confidence*, and boldness: when you find Christ *so neer* you, as to *dwell within you*, and so *particular* and *abundant* in his *Love* to you, as to have given you his *spirit*, and all his Graces, it will breed a *sweet delightful boldness*, and make you run to him as your help and refuge, in all your necessities. When

you find the great promiſe fulfilled to your ſelves [*I will put my Law in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more*] you will [*have boldneſs to enter into the Holyeſt by the blood of Jeſus; by the new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us, through the veil, that is to ſay, his fleſh; And having an high Prieſt over the houſe of God, you may draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having your hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience,* (or the conſcience of evil) *as your bodies are waſhed* (in baptiſm) *with pure water*] Heb. 10. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. [*In Chriſt we may have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him*] *Eph.* 3. 12. This intimate acquaintance with our great High Prieſt, that is *paſſed into the Heavens,* and yet abideth and reigneth in our hearts, will encourage us to *hold faſt our profeſſion, and to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,* *Heb.* 4. 14, 16. When by *unfeigned Love,* we [*know that we are of the truth, and may aſſure our hearts before him, and our Heart condemneth us not, then we have confidence towards God; and whatſoever we ask we receive of him, becauſe we keep*

keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, 1 Joh. 3. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

6. When once you know that you have *Christ within you, you may cheerfully proceed in the way of Life*; when doubting Christians that know not whether they are in the way or not, are still *looking behind them*, and spend their time in perplexed fears, lest they are out of the way, and go on with heaviness and trouble, as uncertain whether they may not lose their labour: and are still *questioning* their *groundwork*, when the building should go on. It is an unspeakable mercy, when a believing Soul is freed from these distracting hindering doubts, and may *bodily and cheerfully hold on his way*, and be *walking* or *working*, when other men are *fearing* and *enquiring* of the way; and may with patience and comfort wait for the reward, the crown of life, when others are still questioning whether they were ever regenerate, and whether their hopes have any ground. We may be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, when we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord,* 1 Cor. 15. 58. We may then *gird up the loins of the mind, and in sobriety hope unto the end,*

for the grace that is to be brought us, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 1. 13.

7. When you are assured that you have *Christ within you*, it may *preserve you from those terrors of soul that affright them that have no such assurance.* O he that knoweth what it is to think of the intolerable wrath of God, and says, [I fear I am the object of this wrath, and must bear this intolerable load everlastingly,] may know what a mercy it is to be assured of our escape. He that knows what it is to think of Hell, and say, [I know not but those endless flames may be my portion,] will know what a mercy it is to *be assured* of deliverance, and to be able to say, I know I am *saved from the wrath to come*, 1 Thes. 1. 10. And that we *are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul*, Heb. 10. 39. And that *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who dyed for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him:*] We may *comfort our selves together and edifie one another*, when we have this *assurance*, 1 Thes. 5. 9, 10, 11.

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They that have felt the burden of a *wounded Spirit* and know what it is to feel the *terrors* of the Lord, and to see Hell fire as it were before their eyes, and to be kept waking by the dreadful apprehensions of their danger, & to be pursued daily by an accusing conscience, setting their sins in order before them, and bringing the threatnings of God to their remembrance, these persons will understand that to be *assured* of a *Christ within us*, and consequently of a *Christ* that is *preparing a place* in glory for us, is a mercy that the mind of man is now unable to value according to the ten thousandth part of its worth.

8. Were you assured that *Christ himself is in you, it would sweeten all the mercies of your lives*: It would assure you that they are all the pledges of his *love*: And *love* in all, would be the *Kernel* and the *Life* of *all*: your friends, your health, your wealth, your deliverances, would be steeped in the *dearest Love of Christ*, and have a spiritual *sweetness* in them, when to the worldling they have but a carnal, unwholsome, luscious sweetness; and to the *doubting Christians* they will be turned into *troubles*, while they are questioning the *Love* and *meaning* of the *giver*, and whether they are sent for

good to them, or to aggravate their condemnation; and the *Company* of the *Giver* will advance your estimation of the *gift*. Mean things with the *company* of our *dearest friends* are sweeter then *abundance* in *their absence*. To have money in your purses, and goods in your houses, and books in your studies, and friends in your near and sweet society, are all advanced to the higher value, when you know that you have also *Christ in your hearts*; and that all these are but the attendants of your *Lord*, and the fruits that drop from the *tree of life*, and the tokens of his Love, importing greater things to follow. Whereas in the crowd of all those mercies the soul would be uncomfortable, or worse, if it mist the presence of its deerest friend: and in the midst of all would live but as in a wilderness, and go seeking after Christ with tears, as *Mary* at his Sepulchre, because they had *taken away her Lord* (as she thought) *and she knew not where they had laid him*, Joh. 20. 13. All mercies would be bitter to us, if the presence of Christ do not put into them that special sweetness which is above the estimate of sense.

9. This assurance would do *much to preserve you from the temptation of sensual delights.*

lights. While you had within you the matter of more excellent contentment, and when you find that these inferiour pleasures are enemies to those which are your happiness and life, you would not be easily taken with the bait. The poorest brutish pleasures are made much of by them that never were acquainted with any better. But after the sweetness of assurance of the Love of God, how little relish is there to be found in the pleasures that are so valued by sensual unbelievers! Let them take them for me, saith the believing soul; may I but still have the comforts of the presence of my Lord, how little shall I miss them? how easily can I spare them?] Silver will be cast by, if it be set in competition with Gold. The company of common acquaintance may be acceptable, till better and greater come: and then they must give place. Men that are taken up with the pleasing entertainment of Christ within them, can scarce afford any more then a *transient salutation* or observance to those earthly things that are the felicity of the carnal mind, and take up its desires, endeavours and delight; when the soul is tempted to turn from Christ, to those deceiving vanities that promise him more content and pleasure, the com-

comfortable thoughts of the love of Chriſt, and his abode within us, and our abode with *him*, do ſenſibly ſcatter and confound ſuch temptations. The preſence of Chriſt the great *Reconciler*, doth *reconcile us to our ſelves*, and make us willing to be *more at home*. He that is out of love with the *company* that he hath at home, is eaſily drawn to *go abroad*: But who can endure to be much *abroad*, that knoweth of ſuch a gueſt as *Chriſt* at *home*? We ſhall ſay as *Peter*, Joh. 6. 68, 69. [*Lord, to whom ſhall we goe? thou haſt the words of eternal life; and we believe and are ſure thou art that Chriſt the ſon of the living God.*] And as *Matth.* 7. 4. when he ſaw him in a little of his Glory [*Maſter it is good for us to be here.*] And if the riches of the world were offered to draw a ſoul from Chriſt, that hath the *knowledge* of his *ſpecial love* and *preſence*, the tempter would have no better entertainment then *Simon Magus* had with *Peter*, Act. 8. 20. *Their money periſh with them that think Chriſt and his graces to be no better then money.*

10. *How eaſie and ſweet would all Gods ſervice be to you, if you were aſſured that Chriſt abideth in you?* What delightful acceſs

ceſs might you have in prayer, when you know that Chriſt himſelf ſpeaks for you! not as if the *Father himſelf* were *unwilling* to do us good, but that he will do it in the *name* and for the *ſake* and *merits* of his ſon: which is the meaning of Chriſt in thoſe words which ſeem to deny his interceſſion, Joh. 16. 26. [*At that day ye ſhall ask in my name; and I ſay not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me*, &c.] I appeal to your own hearts, Chriſtians, whether you would not be much more *willing* and *ready* to *pray*? and whether prayer would not be a *ſweeter* employment to you, if you were ſure of Chriſts abode within you, and interceſſion for you, and conſequently that all your prayers are graciouſly accepted of the Lord! you would not then deſire the vain *ſociety* of empty perſons; nor ſeek for *recreation* in their inſipid, frothy, inſignificant diſcourſe. The opening of your heart to your heavenly Father, and pleading the merits of his ſon, in your believing petitions for his ſaving benefits, would be a more *contenting* kind of *pleaſure* to you.

How ſweet would *meditation* be to you, if you could ſtill think on Chriſt and all the

riches

riches of his kingdom as *your own*? could you look up to *Heaven*, and ſay with grounded confidence, *It is mine, and there I muſt abide and reign for ever!* could you think of the *heavenly hoſt* as thoſe that muſt be your *own companions*, and of their *holy employment* as that which muſt be your *own* for ever, it would make the aſcent of your minds to be more *frequent*, and *meditation* to be a more *pleaſant* work: were you but aſſured of your *ſpecial intereſt* in *God*, and that all his attributes are by his *Love* and *Covenant engaged* for your happineſs, experience would make you ſay, [*In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my ſoul*, Pſal. 44. 19. [*I will ſing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will ſing praiſe to my God while I have my being: My Meditation of him ſhall be ſweet; I will be glad in the Lord*, Pſal. 104. 33, 34. Could you ſay with full aſſurance that you are the children of the *Promiſes*, and that they are all *your own*, how ſweet would the *reading* and *meditation* on the *holy ſcriptures* be to you! How dearly would you *love* the word! What a treaſure would you judge it! *your delight would be then in the Law of the Lord, and you would meditate in it day and night*, Pſal. 1. 2. To find ſuch grounds

grounds of faith and hope, and riches of consolation in every page, and assuredly to say, *All this is mine*, would make you better *understand* why *David* did indite all the 119. Psalm in high commendations of the word of God, and would make you join in his affectionate expressions, Psal. 119. 97, 98, 99. *O how I love thy Law! it is my Meditation all the day: Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser then mine enemies, for it is ever with me.*

Sermons also would be much sweeter to you, when you could confidently take home the consolatory part, and use our ministry as a help to your faith, and hope, and joy; whereas your *doubts* and *fears* lest you are still unregenerate, will turn all that you hear, or read, or meditate on, into food and fuel for themselves to work upon; and you will gather up all that tends to your *disquietment*, and say, It is your part; and cast away all that tendeth to your *consolation*, and say, it belongeth not to you: and the most comforting passages of the word will be turned into your discomfort: and the promises will seem to you as *none*, while you imagine that they are *none of yours*; And the loss of your *peace* and *comfort* will not be the worst: But this will increase

creaſe your *backwardneſs* to *duty*; and when your *delight* in the worſhip of God is gone, your *inclination* to it will abate, and it will ſeem a *burden* to you, and be as *meat* to the ſtomacks of the *ſick*, that with the carefulleſt preparation and much intreaty can hardly be brought to get it down, and can bear but little and that which is ſuited to their diſeaſed appetites.

The ſame I may ſay of the *Sacraments of the Lords ſupper*. How *ſweet* will it be to you, if you are *aſſured* that the *ſame Chriſt* that is *there repreſented* as broken and bleeding for your ſins, doth *dwell within you* by his ſpirit! What wellcome entertainment would you expect and find, if you knew that you brought the *feaſt* and the *Maſter* of the feaſt with you in your hearts; and had there entirely entertained him, with whom you expect communion in the ſacrament! How boldly and comfortably would your hungry ſouls then feed upon him! with what refreſhing acts of faith would you there take the ſealed promiſe and pardon of your ſins! whereas when you come in fears and doubting, and muſt take the *body* and *blood* of Chriſt in their *Repreſentations*, with your hand and mouth, while you know not whether you receive

him

him with the *heart*, and whether you have any special interest in him, O what a damp it casteth on the soul! how it stifleth its hopes and joys, and turneth the Sacrament which is appointed for their comfort, into their greater trouble! It hath many a time grieved me to observe that no ordinance doth cast many upright souls into greater perplexities, and discouragements, and distresses, then the Lords Supper; because they come to it with *double reverence*, and by the *doubtings* of their *title*, and questioning their preparedness, and by their *fears* of *eating and drinking unworthily*, their souls are utterly discomposed with perplexing passions, and turned from the pleasant exercise of faith, and the delighful entercourse that they should have with God; and they are distempered and put out of relish to all the sweetness of the Gospel: And then they are frightened from the Sacrament by such sad experiences, and dare come thither no more, for fear of eating judgement to themselves. And should not Christians labour to remove the cause of such miserable distracting fears, that so much wrong both Christ and them, and to recover their well-grounded peace and comfort?

11. Your

11. Your *Love to God*, which is the Heart and Life of the new creature, doth so much depend upon your *knowledge of his love to you*, as should make you much more desirous of such a *knowledge*. *Love* is the *end* of *faith*; and *faith* the *way* to *Love*. So much of *Love* as is in every duty, so much *holiness* is in it, and no more. *Love* is the *sum* of the *commandments*. It is the *fulfilling* of the *Law*, Rom. 13. 10. Mat. 22. 37. Mark 12. 33. Though God loved us *first*, as *purposing* our *good*, before we loved him, 1 *Joh.* 4. 9. 10. And we therefore *Love him*, because he *first loved us*, v. 19. Yet doth he *Love* us by *complacency* and *acceptance*, *because we love the* Father and the son: Joh. 16. 27. [*For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*] And what will more effectually kindle in you the fervent *Love of Christ*, then to *know that he loveth you*, and *dwelleth in you?* All this is expresst by Christ himself, in Joh 14. 20. 21, 22, 23. [*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you: He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him,*

and

and will manifest my self unto him —— *If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*] 1 Cor. 8. 3. *If any man love God, the same is known of him*] with a knowledge of special *Love* and approbation. This is no disparagement to *faith*, whose nature and use is to *work by Love*, Gal. 5. 6. What a man *Loveth, such* he is. The *Love* is the *man*. Our *Love* is judged by our *Life*, as the *cause* by the effect: but the *Life* is judged by the *Love*, as the *fruits* by the *tree*, the *effects* by the *cause*. [*Mores autem nostri non ex eo; quod quisque novit, sed ex eo quod diligit, dijudicari solent nec faciunt bonos vel malos mores, nisi boni vel mali amores.*] saith *Augustine*; that is [*Our manners are not used to be judged of according to that which every man knoweth, but according to that which he loveth: It is only good or evil love, that maketh good or evil manners.*] If *Plato* could say (as *Augustine* citeth him, *lib.* 8. *de Civit. Dei*) *Hoc est Philosophari, scilicet Deum amare: To be a Philosopher, is to Love God.*] Much more should we say, *Hoc est Christianum agere, this is the doctrine and the work of a Christian, even the Love of God.* Indeed it is the *work* of

the *Redeemer*, to *recover* the heart of man to *God*, and to bring us to *Love him* by *representing* him to us as the *most amiable suitable* object of our Love: And the *perfection* of *Love*, is *Heaven* it self. [*O jugum sancti amoris, (inq.* Bernard.) *quam dulciter capis, glorioſe laqueas, ſuaviter premis, delectanter oneras, fortiter ſtringis, prudenter erudis!*] that is [*The yoak of holy Love, O how ſweetly doſt thou ſurprize? how glorioufly doſt thou inthrall? how pleſantly doſt thou preſs? how delightfully doſt thou load? how ſtrongly doſt thou bind? how prudently doſt thou inſtruct?*] [*O felix amor ex quo oritur ſtrenuitas morum, puritas affectionum, ſubtilitas intellectuum, deſideriorum ſanctitas, operum claritas, virtutum fœcunditas, meritorum dignitas, premiorum ſublimitas*] [*O happy Love, from which ariſeth the ſtrength of manners, the purity of affections, the ſubtilty of intellects, the ſanctity of deſires, the excellency of works, the fruitfulneſs of vertues, the dignity of deſerts the ſublimity of the reward!*] I appeal to your own conſciences Chriſtians; would you not think it a foretaſte of Heaven upon earth, if you could but *Love God* as *much* as you *deſire*? would any kind of life that you can imagine, be

ſo

so *desirable* and *delightful* to you! Would any thing be more *acceptable* unto *God!* And on the contrary, a *soul* without the *Love of God*, is worse then a *Corpse* without a *soul*. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathama maranatha*, 1 Cor. 16. 22.

And do I need to tell you what a powerful incentive it is to *Love*, to *know* that you *are beloved*? It will make *Christ* much more *dear to you*, to *know* how *dear you are to him*. What is said of *affective Love in us*, may partly be said of *attractive Love in Christ*. Eccles. 8. 7. *Many waters cannot quench Love, neither can the floods drown it: no riches can purchase* what it can attract; when you find that he hath you *as a seal upon his arm and heart*, v. 6. and that you are *dear* to him as the *apple of his eye*; what holy flames will this kindle in your breast! If it be *almost impossible* with your *equals* upon *earth* not to *Love them that Love you* (which Christ telleth you that *even Publicans will do*, Matth. 5. 46.) how much more should *the Love of Christ constrain us* abundantly to Love him, when being infinitely above us, *his Love descendeth*, that *ours may ascend! His Love* puts forth the hand from heaven, to fetch us up.

O Christians, you little know how Satan wrongeth you, by drawing you to *deny*, or *doubt* of the special Love of God. How can you *Love him* that you apprehend to be *your enemie*, and to *intend your ruine*? Doubtless not so *easily* as if you *know* him to be your *friend*. In reason is there any likelier way to draw you to *hate God*, then to draw you to *believe that he hateth you*? Can your *thoughts* be *pleasant* of him? or your *speeches* of him *sweet*? or can you *attend* him, or draw near him with *delight*, while you think he *hateth you*, and hath decreed your damnation? you may *fear him*, as he is a terrible *avenger*; and you may confess his judgements to be just: but can you amicably *embrace* the *consuming fire* and love to *dwell with the everlasting burnings!*

O therefore as ever you would have the Love of God to *animate*, and *sanctifie*, and *delight* your souls, study the greatness of his Love to you, and labour with all possible speed and diligence, to find that Christ by his spirit is within you. It is the *whole work of sanctification* that Satan would destroy or weaken by your doubts: And it is the *whole work of sanctification* that by Love would be promoted, if you *knew* your

your intereſt in the *Love* of Chriſt.

12. It is the *knowledge of Chriſt dwelling in you*, and ſo of the *ſpecial Love of God*, that muſt *acquaint you with a life of holy Thankfulneſs and praiſe*. Theſe *higheſt* and *moſt acceptable* duties, will be out of your reach if Satan can *hide* from you that mercy which muſt be the chiefeſt *matter* of your *Thankſgiving*. Will that ſoul be in *tune* for the high *Praiſes* of the Lord, that thinks he meaneth to uſe him as an enemy? Can you look for any *cheerful thankſgiving* from him that looks to lie in hell? will he not rather cry with *David*, Pſal. 6. 5. [*In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who ſhall give thee thanks?* Pſal. 30. 9, *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? ſhall the duſt praiſe thee? ſhall it declare thy truth?*] ſhall the *damned praiſe* thee, or ſhall they give thee thanks that muſt be ſcorched with the flames of thine indignation? Can you expect that *Joy* ſhould be in their hearts, or *cheerfulneſs* in their countenances, or *praiſes* in their mouths, that think they are *Reprobated* to the *fire of Hell*? Undoubtedly *Satan* is not ignorant, that this is the way to deprive *God* of the *Service* which is moſt *acceptable* to him, and you of the *plea-*

sures of so *sweet a life.* And therefore he that envyeth *both*, will do his *worst* to damp your spirits, and breed uncomfortable doubts and fears, and wrongful suspitions in your minds. Whereas the Knowledge of your interest in Christ, would be a continual storehouse of thanksgiving and praise, and teach your hearts as well as your tongues, to say with *David*, [*Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* —— *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye Righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart.*] Psal. 32. 1, 2, 11. *Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name: Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases: Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies,* Psal. 103. 1, 2, 3, 4.] *O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me: O Lord thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit; sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of*

his

his holineſs : for his anger endureth but for a moment : in his favour is life, Pſal. 30. 2, 3, 4, 5. *Thankſgiving* would be the very pulſe and breath of your aſſurance of Chriſt dwelling in you. You would ſay with *Paul*, Eph. 1. 3, 4. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in celeſtials in Chriſt : According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and blameleſs before him in Love : having predeſtinated us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ; In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remiſſion of ſins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded tow rd us*, &c.] Thus *faith* and *aſſurance*, as they have an unſpeakable *ſtore* to work upon, ſo it is natural to them to expatiate in the *praiſe* of our *Redeemer*, and to *delight* in amplifications and commemorations of the ways of grace. Juſt ſo doth *Peter* begin his firſt Epiſtle [*Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the*

resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoyce, &c.

No wonder if the *Heirs of Heaven* be inclined to the *language* and *the work* of *Heaven*. I think there are *few* of you that would not *rejoice*, and by your *speech*, and *countenance express* your joy, if you had *assurance* but of the dignities and dominions of *this world*. And can he choose but express his *Joy* and *Thankfulness*, that hath *assurance* of the *crown of life?* What fragrant thoughts should possess that mind that knoweth it self to be possessed by the Spirit of the living God! How *thankfull* will he be that knows he hath *Christ and Heaven* to be thankfull for! What sweet delights should fill up the hours of that mans life, that knows the son of God liveth in him, and that he shall live in Joy with Christ for ever! How gladly will he be exercised in the praises of his Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, that knows it must be his work for ever? No wonder if *this Joy* be a *stranger* to their hearts, that are

are strangers to Christ, or strangers to their *interest* in his love: No wonder if they have no *hearts* for these *celestial works*, that have no *part* in the *celestial inheritance*, or that *know not* that they have any part therein. How can they joyfully give thanks for that which they *know not* that they *have* or ever *shall have*, or have any *probability* to attain!

But to that man that is *assured* of *Christ within him*, Heaven and Earth and all their store do offer themselves as the matter of his *Thanks*, and do furnish him with provisions to feed his *Praises*. What a shame is it that an assured heir of Heaven should be scant and barren in *comfort* to *himself*, or in *Thanks* and *Praise* to *Jesus Christ*, when he hath so full a *heap* of *Love* and *mercy* to fetch his *motives* from, and hath *two worlds* to furnish him with the precioussest materials; and hath no less then *Infinite goodness* even *God himself*, to be the *subject* of his *Praise!* [*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever*: (what ever others do) *Let Israel say, let the house of* Aaron *say, let them that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever*, Psal. 118. 1, 2, 3, 4. The knowledge of our Interest fitteth us for his Praise. [Psal. 118. 28. [*Thou art my God*

God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.] Psal. 116. 16, 17. [*O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds; I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord?*] His *Praise* is for [*the Congregation of his Saints,* Psal. 141. 1, 2. *Let Israel rejoyce in him that made him; let the children of* Zion *be joyful in their King*] Psal. 148. 13, 14. [*Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people; the Praise of all his Saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.*] Psal. 132. 16. *I will also cloath his priests with salvation, and his Saints shall shout aloud for joy*] *Praise* is a work so proper for the *Saints*, and *Thanksgiving* must be fed *with* the *knowledge* of *your mercies*, that Satan well knoweth, what he shall get by it, and what *you* will *lose*, if he can but *hide your mercies* from you. The *height* of his malice is *against the Lord*, and the *next* is *against you*: and how can he shew it more then by drawing you to *rob God* of his *Thanks* and *Praise*, when he hath blessed and enriched

riched you with the chiefest of his mercies! Labour therefore Christians to *know* that you have that *Grace* that may be the *Matter* and *Cause* of so sweet and acceptable an employment as the *Praises of your Lord.*

13. Moreover, you should consider that *without the knowledge of your interest in Christ, you cannot live to the honour of your Redeemer, in such a measure as the Gospel doth require.* The *excellency* of *Gospel mercies* will be *veiled* and obscured by you, and will not be revealed and honoured by your lives. Your *low* and *poor* dejected spirits, will be a dishonour to the *faith* and *hope* of the Saints, and to the *Glorious inheritance* of which you have so full a prospect in the *promises.* If you take the *son of a Prince* in his infancy, and *educate* him as the *son of a plowman*, he will not live to the honour of his birth, which he is not acquainted with. The *heirs of Heaven* that *know not themselves to* be *such*, may live like the heirs of Heaven as to *uprightness* and *humility*; but not in the *triumphant joy*, nor in the *courageous boldness*, which becometh a *Believer.* What an *injury* and *dishonour* is to our *Redeemer*, that when he hath done and suffered so much to make

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us happy, we should walk as heavily as if he had done *nothing* for us at all! And when he hath so fully secured us of *everlasting happiness*, and told us of it so expressly that our *joy may be full*, we should live as if the *Gospel* were *not the Gospel*, and such things had never been *promised* or *revealed!* When Heaven is the Object, and the promise of God is the groundwork of our faith, we should live above all earthly things, as having the honours and pleasures of the world under our feet, accounting all as *loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 3. 8. whom we should *love* though *we have not seen him; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing we should rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory; as those that must receive the end of their faith, the salvation of our souls*] 1 Pet. 1. 8, 9. And how can we do this, if we are still questioning the *Love of Christ*, or our *interest* in it!

Believers should with undaunted resolution charge through the armies of temptation, and conquer difficulties, and suffer for the name of Christ with joy; accounting it *a blessed thing* to be persecuted *for righteousness sake*, because *that theirs is*

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the kingdom of Heaven: Because of the *greatness of the Reward*, they should *rejoyce and be exceeding glad*, Matth. 5. 10, 12. And how can they do this, that believe not that the *Reward* and *Kingdom* will be *theirs!*

The *joys of faith*, and confidence on the promise and strength of Christ, should overcome all inordinate *fears of man*, [*For he hath said, I will never fail thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*, Heb. 13. 5. 6. And how can we do this, while we are questioning our part in the Christ and promise that we should thus boldly trust upon!

14. Lastly consider, that the *knowledge of your part in Christ, may make all sufferings easie to you.* You will be so much satisfied in God your portion, as will abate the *desires*, and drown the *joys* and *sorrows* of the world. You will judge the *sufferings of this present time unworthy to be compared to the Glory, that shall be revealed in us* Rom. 8. 18. You will choose rather *to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*; *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of* the world,

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as *having respect to the recompence of reward*, Heb. 11. 25, 26. All this *must be* done, and *will* be done by *true believers*, that *have an assurance* of their own sincerity; They *must* and *will forsake all and take up the Cross and follow Christ*, in hope of *a Reward in Heaven*, as it is offered them in the Gospel, *when they know* their special interest in it. For these are Christs terms which he imposeth on all that will be his Disciples, *Luk.* 14. 33. & 18. 22, 24, 25. But you may certainly perceive that it will be much more *easie* to part with all, and *undergoe* and *do* all this, wen we have the great encouragement of our *assured interest*, then when we have no more but the *common offer*. To instance in some particulars.

1. Do you live where *serious Godliness is derided*, and you cannot *obey the word of God*, and *seek first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness*, without being made the *common scorn*, and the daily jeast and by-word of the company? Let it be so: If you *know* that you have *Christ within you*, and are secured of the *everlasting joys*, will you feel, will you regard such things as these? shall the *jeast* of a distracted miserable fool, abate the *joy* of your

assured

assured happiness? Princes and noblemen will not forsake their *dominions* or *Lord-ships*, nor cast away the *esteem* and *comfort* of all they have, because the poor do ordinarily reproach them as Proud, unmerciful oppressors. They think they may bear the words of the miserable, while they have the the pleasure of prosperity: And shall not *we* give losers leave to talke? We will not be *mockt* out of the *comfort* of our *health* or *wealth*, our *habitations* or our *friends*: and shall we be *mockt* out of the *comfort* of *Christ* and of the presence of the comforter himself! If they that *go naked deride you* for having *cloaths*; and they that are out of doors in the *cold* and *rain*, *deride* you that are *warm* and *dry* withthin; or they that are *sick* deride you for being *well*, this will but make you more sensible of your felicity, and pitty them that have added such *folly* to their *wants*; so will it *increase* the sense of your felicity, to find that you are possessed of so unspeakable a mercy, which others have not so far tasted of as to know its worth. If *you* have the *feast*, you may bear the words of *famished unhappy* soul's, that speak against it because they taste it not: If *you* are in your *Fathers arms*, you may bear the scorns of

of such as stand without the doors.

2. If you have the *contradictions* and *opposition* of the *ignorant or malicious, speaking evil of things they know not,* and perswading you from the ways of righteousness, how *easily* may all this be born while you have *Christ within you* to strengthenand encourage you! Had you but *his example* before you, who is *the author and finisher of your faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and endured such contradiction of sinners against himself,* it should keep you from *being weary and fainting in your minds:* Heb. 12. 2, 3. But when you have *his presence, his spirit,* and *his help,* how much should it corroborate and confirm you!

3. How *easily* may you bear *the slanders of your own or the Gospels enemies,* as long as you are *sure* of your interest in Christ? How *easily* may you suffer them to call you by their own names, *pestilent fellows and movers of sedition among the People, ringleaders of a Sect, prophaners of the Temple,* as *Paul* was called, *Act.* 24. 5, 6. as long as you have *Christ within you,* that was called *Beelzebub* for you sakes, *Matth.* 10 25. Your *Judge* that must finally decide the case, is *your dearest friend,* and *dwelleth in you:*

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It is *he that will justifie you*; *who is he that condemneth you? Rom.* 8. 33, 34. His *approbation* is *your life* and *comfort*. How *inconsiderable* is it as to your own felicity, what *mortal worms* shall say or think of you? What if they call you all that is naught, and *stain* your *names*, and *obscure* your *innocency*, and make others believe the falsest accusations, that Satan can use their tongues to utter of you? You have enough against all this *within you*: What if you go for *hypocrites*, or *factious*, or what *malignity* can call you, until the day of Judgement? As long as you have so good security of being then fully cleared of all, and your righteousness vindicated by your Judge; how easily may you now bear the slanders of men, that prove themselves wicked, by falsly affirming it of you? You can endure to be called *Poor*, so you be not poor; and to be called *sick*, as long as you are well. And you may well endure to be called *Proud*, while you are *Humble*; and *factious*, while you are the *Lovers* of *Unity* and *Peace*; or *Hypocrites*, while you are *sincere*. How boldly may you say with the Prophet, *Isaiah* 50. 7, 8, 9. [*The Lord God will help me: therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not*

be ashamed: He is near that justifieth me; Who will contend with me? let us stand together: Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me: Behold the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they shall all wax old as a garment: the moth shall eat them up.]

Had you but *Pauls assurance* and *experience* of *Christ dwelling in you*, you might imitate him in a holy contempt of all the slanders and revilings of the world, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. [*For I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were men appointed to death: For we are made a spectacle to the world, and to Angels, and to men: We are fools for Christs sake, but ye are wise in Christ: We are weak, but ye are strong: Ye are honourable, but we are despised: Even unto this present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffetted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreate: We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*] Thus may we *do and suffer all things through Christ that strengtheneth us*, *Phil.* 4. 13. What matter is it what *men call us*, if *God call*

call us his *children*, and *friends*, and *Christ* be *not ashamed to call us Brethren? With us* it will *be a very small thing to be judged of man*, while we know *the Lord that must judge us*, is on our side, 1 *Cor.* 4. 3,4. It lyeth not on our hands to *justifie our selves*: It is *Christ* that hath undertaken to answer for us; and made it the work of his *office* to *justifie* us: and to him we may boldly and comfortably leave it: and let all the *accusers* prepare their charge, and deal with him, and do their worst.

4. How easily may you bear *imprisonment*, *banishment*, or other *persecution*, as long as you are *assured* of the *Love of Christ?* Can you fear to *dwell* where *Christ dwells with you?* If he will *go* with you through *fire* and *water*, what need you *fear?* Those owning appropriating words, will make us venture upon the greatest perils [*Fear not, for I have Redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt—— For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of* Israel, *thy Saviour.*] Who would not with *Peter* cast himself into the *Sea*, or walk with confi-

dence upon the *waters*, if *Christ be there* and call us to him? *Matth.* 14. 28, 29. *John* 21. 7.

The eleventh chapter to the Hebrews doth recapitulate the victories of faith, and shew us what the *Hope of unseen things* can cause Believers patiently to undergo. How cheerfully will he endure the *foulest way*, that is *assured* to come safe to *such* a *home*? What will a man stick at that knows he is following Christ to Heaven; and knoweth that he *shall reign with him*, when he hath *suffered with him*? 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. Who wil refuse *blood letting*, that is assured beforehand that it shall procure his health? He is *unworthy* of Christ, and of salvation, that thinks any thing in the world too good to lose for them, *Matth.* 10. 37. What matter is it whether Death find us in *honour* or *dishonour*, in our *own Countrey* or in *another*, at *liberty* or in *prison*, so we are *sure* it find us not in a *state of death*. Who would not rather *pass to Glory* by as straight a way as *John Baptist*, *Stephen*, or other Martyrs did, then with their persecutors to prosper in the way to *misery*? Who can for shame repine at the loss of *temporal commodities*, that is secured of the *eternal Joyes*? If *assurance* of the *Love of God*, would not embolden

bolden you to *patient suffering*, and to lay down *life* and *all* for Christ, what do you think should ever do it?

But when you are *afraid* lest *death* will turn you into *Hell*, What wonder if you timerously draw back? When you know not whether ever you shall have *any better*, no wonder if you are loth to part with the *seeming happiness* which you *have*. Those doubts and fears *enfeeble* the soul, and spoil you of that valour that becomes a souldier of Christ.

5. All *personal crosses* in your *estates*, your *families*, your *friends*, your *health*, will be *easily born*, if you are once *assured of your salvation*. To a man that is *passing into Heaven*, all these are almost *inconsiderable things*. What is *Lazarus* the *worse now* for his *sores* or *rags*? Or what is the Rich man the *better* for his *sumptuous attire* and *fare*? *Luke* 16. Whether you be *poor* or *rich*, *sick* or *sound*, whether you are *used kindly* or *unkindly* in the world, are questions of so small *importance*, that you are not *much concerned* in the answer of them: But whether you have *Christ within you*, or *be reprobates*; whether you are the *heirs of the promise*, or are *under the curse*, are questions of *everlasting consequence*.

6. Lastly, you may *comfortably receive the sentence of death*, when once you are *assured* of the *Life of Grace*, and that you have escaped *everlasting death*. Though *nature* will be still *averse* to a dissolution, yet faith will make you cheerfully submit, *desiring to depart and be with Christ*, as the best condition for you, *Phil.* 1. 23. When you *know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, you have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; you will then *groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with your house which is from heaven: not to be uncloathed*, (for the union of *soul* and body, is the constitution of the man, which nature cannot but desire) *but to be cloathed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life*: This God doth *work you for*, who *giveth you the earnest of the spirit*; therefore as men that *know while you are at home in the body, you are absent from the Lord, and that walk by faith, and not by sight, you would be alwaies confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6, 7, 8.

Though it be *troublesom* to *remove your dwelling*, yet you would not stick upon the *trouble*, if you were sure to change a *cottage* for

for a *Court*: nor would you refuse to cross the Seas, to change a *prison* for a *Kingdom*. The *holy desires* of Believers, do prepare them for a *safe death*; but it is the *assurance* of their *future happiness*, or the *believing expectation* of it, that must prepare them for a death that is *safe and comfortable*. The Death of the *Presumptuous* may be *quiet*, but not *safe*: The Death of *doubting troubled Believers* may be *safe*, but not *quiet*: The Death of the *ungodly*, that have *awakened undeceived consciences*, is neither *safe* nor *quiet*: But the Death of *strong Believers* that have attained *assurance*, is *both*. And he that findeth *Christ within him*, may know that when he *dyeth*, he shall *be with Christ*: His *dwelling in us by faith*, by *Love*, and by his *Spirit*, is a pledge that we shall *dwell with him*. *Christ within us*, will certainly carry us unto *Christ above us*. Let Socinians question the happiness of such departed souls, or doubt whether they be in heaven before the resurrection; I am sure that they *are with Christ*, as the fore-cited places shew, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7, 8. and *Phil.* 1. 23. and many other: We are *following him*, that when he had *conquered Death*, and *went before us*, did send that message to his doubting troubled Disciples, (which is to me so full of

ſweetneſs, that me thinks I can ſcarce too oft recite it) *John* 20. 17. [*Go to my Brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and to your God.*] O piercing, melting words, which methinks do *write themſelves* upon my heart, when ever I read them with attention and conſideration! Know once that you are *his Brethren*, and that *his Father* is *your Father*, and *his God* is *your God*, and that he is *aſcended* and *glorified* in *your nature*; and then how can you be *unwilling* to be diſmiſſed from the bondage of this fleſh, and *be with Chriſt*! For in his *Fathers houſe are many manſions: and he is gone before to prepare a place for us: and will come again and receive us unto himſelf, that where he is, there we may be alſo*, *John* 14. 2, 3. And that this is *his will* for all his ſervants, he hath declared in that comfortable promiſe, (which alſo I have found ſo full of ſweetneſs, that I value it above all the riches of the world) *John* 12. 26. [*If any man ſerve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be: If any man ſerve me, him will my Father honour*] The *Spirit of Chriſt within you*, is the *earneſt* of all this: Be *aſſured* of your *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Love*, and you may be *aſſured* to poſſeſs the

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Good believed and *Hoped for* and *Loved*. The *incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever*, of which you are *new born* (1 Pet. 1. 23.) doth tend to the *incorruptible crown* (1 Pet. 5. 4.) even the *Crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *And so shall we ever be with the Lord*, as the Apostle comfortably speaks, 1 *Thes.* 4. 17. and seasonably annexeth the use of such a cordial, vers. 18. [*wherefore comfort one another with these words.*]

Whether we are to *die* by the *decay of nature*, or by the *storm* of any *violent disease*, or by the *hand of persecutors* or any other instruments of Satan, the difference is small: They are but several ways of landing at the shore of happiness, which we were making towards, through all the duties and difficulties of our lives. May we by *any Death* be sent *to Christ*, let them domineer a while that *stay behind*, and are *conquerors* and *happy* in their *dream*: we shall neither *miss* nor *desire their* felicity. May *I die assured of the Love of God*, how little regardable is it whether I be *poor* or *rich till then*? or in what *manner* Death shall do its execution? and how little cause have

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blessed souls, to envie them that are left on earth, in a quiet and prosperous passage to damnation?

And what an ease and pleasure is this to a *mans mind through all his life*, to be able with well-grounded comfort, *to think of death?* What *cares* can *vex* him that hath secured his everlasting state? What *losses* should *afflict* him that is sure he shall not lose his soul, and is sure to gain eternal life? What *fears* should *disquiet* him that is sure to escape the wrath of God? What *wants* should *trouble* him that knoweth he is an heir of Heaven? Why should the indignation or threatnings of man, be any temptation to turn him out of the way of duty, or dismay his mind, who knoweth that they can but *kill the body*, and dismiss the soul into his blessed presence, whom it loveth and laboureth and longs to see? what should inordinately *grieve* that man that is certain of *eternal joy?* What else should he *thirst* for, that hath *in him the well of living waters springing up to everlasting life?* Joh. 4. 14. And what should deprive that man of *comfort*, that knoweth he hath the *Comforter within him*, and shall be for *ever comforted* with his *masters joy?* And what should break the *Peace* and *Patience* of him that is assured of

of *Everlasting Rest*? If the *assurance* of a *happy death* cannot make it *welcome*, and cannot make *affliction easie*, and fill our lives with the *Joyes of Hope*, I know not what can do it.

But alas for those poor souls that know not whither death will send them, or at least have not good *grounds* of *hope*, what wonder if *through the fear of death they be all their life time subject unto bondage!* Heb. 2. 14. Methinks in the midst of their wealth and pleasure, they should not be so stupid as to forget the millions that are gone before them, that lately were as jovial and secure as they; and how short their dreaming feast will be; Methinks all the beauty of their fleshly Idols, should be blasted with those nipping frosts and storms, that in their serious forethoughts, come in upon them, from the black and dreadful regions of death! Methinks at any time it should *damp* their *mirth*, and allay the ebullition of their phrenetick blood, to remember [*For all this I must die*] and it may be *this night*, that the *fool* must deliver up *his soul*; and then *Whose shall those things be which he hath provided!* Luk. 12. 19, 20. *Then* who shall be the *Lord*, and who the *Knight* or *Gentleman*? and who shall wear

wear the *gay attire*? and who ſhall *domineer*, and ſay, *Our will ſhall be done*, and *thus we will have it*? Then where is the pleaſure of luſt, and merry company, and meat drink and ſports? Methinks, Solomons *memento*, Eccleſ. 11. 9. ſhould bring them to themſelves [*Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all theſe things, God will bring thee into judgement*] And as the ſound of theſe words [*I muſt ſhortly die*] methinks, ſhould be always in your ears; ſo in reaſon, the Queſtion [*Whether muſt I then go*] ſhould be always as it were *before your eyes*, till your ſouls have received a ſatisfactory anſwer to it. O what an amazing dreadful thing it is, when an unſanctified unprepared ſoul muſt ſay [*I muſt depart from earth, but I know not whither! I know not whether unto Heaven or Hell; Here I am now, but where muſt I be for ever!*] When men believe that their *next habitation* muſt be *everlaſting*, methinks, the Queſtion [*Whether muſt I goe*] ſhould be day and night upon their minds, till they can ſay upon good grounds, [*I ſhall go to the bleſſed preſence of the Lord:*

Lord:] O had you but the hearts of men within you, methinks the sense of this one Question, [*Whither must I go when I leave the flesh?*] should so possess you, that it should give your souls no rest, till you were able to say, [*We shall be with Christ, because he dwelleth in us here, and hath sealed us and given us the earnest of his spirit*: or at least, till you have *good hopes* of this, and have done *your best* to make it sure.

And thus I have told you of how great importance it is to *believers*, to attain *assurance* of the *love* of *God*, and to know that *Christ abideth in them*. And now I think you will confess, I have proved the *necessity* of *Self-knowledge*, both to the *unregenerate*, and the *regenerate*, though in several degrees: and having opened the disease, and shewed you the need of a remedy, I am next to direct you in the application for the cure.

I Doubt not but there are many of the Hearers that by this time, are desirous to be instructed, how this *self knowledge* may be attained: For whose satisfaction, and for the reducing of all that hath been spoken into practise, I shall next acquaint you with the *Hinderances* of *Self-knowledge* (the *removing of them* being not the least point in the cure,) and with the *Positive Directions* to be practised for the attainment of it: And because the *Hinderances* and *Helps* are *contrary*, I shall open both together as we go on.

The *Hinderances* of *self knowledge* are some of them *without us*, and some *within us*; and so must be the *Helps*.

I. The *external Hinderances* are these.

1. *The failing of Ministers in their part of the work, through unskilfulness or unfaithfulness*, is a great cause that so many are *ignorant of themselves*. They are the *Lights* of the world: and if *they* are eclipsed, or put under a bushell; if they are darkened by the snuff of their own corruptions; or if they feed not their light by the oile of diligent studies and other endeavours; or if they will not go along

along with men into the dark and unknown corners of the heart, what wonder if mens hearts remain in darkneſs, when thoſe that *by office* are appointed to afford them Light, do fail them? It is not a general dull diſcourſe, or critical obſervations upon words, or the ſubtile deciſion of ſome nice and curious queſtions of the ſchools, (though theſe may be uſeful to their proper ends,) nor is it a neat and well compoſed ſpeech about ſome other diſtant matters, that is like to acquaint a ſinner with himſelf. How many ſermons may we hear (that to others ends are not unprofitable) that are levelled at ſome mark or other, that is very far from the *Hearers hearts*, and therefore are never like to convince them, or prick them, or open and convert them? And if our congregations were in ſuch caſe, as that they *needed* no cloſer quickening work, ſuch preaching might be born with and commended: But when ſo many uſually ſit before us, that muſt ſhortly dye, and are unprepared, and that are condemned by the Law of God, and muſt be pardoned or finally condemned: that muſt be ſaved from their ſins, that they may be ſaved from everlaſting miſery, I think it is time for us to talk to them of ſuch things as

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moſt concern them ; and that in ſuch a matter as may moſt effectually convince, awake and change them. When we come to them on their *ſick-beds*, we talk not then to them of diſtant or impertinent things : of words, or forms, or parties, or by-opinions, but of the ſtate of their ſouls, and their appearing before the Lord, and how they may be ready, that death may be both ſafe and comfortable to them : (though a ſuperſtitious miſerable fellow, that knoweth no better things himſelf, may talk to the ſick of beads, and relicts, and of being on this ſide or that, for this ceremony or the other, and may think to conjure the unholy ſpirit out of him, by ſome affected words of devotions uttered from a graceleſs ſenſeleſs heart, or to command him out by Papal authority, as if they would charm his ſoul to heaven, by ſaying over ſome lifeleſs forms, and uſing the *Goſpel* as a *ſpell* ; Yet Miniſters indeed that know themſelves what Faith and what Repentance is, and what it is to be regenerate, and to be prepared to die, do know that they have other work to do.) The Goſpel *offereth* men their *Choice*, whether they will have *Holineſs* or *ſin* ; and be *ruled by Chriſt*, or *by* their *fleſhly luſts* ; and ſo whether

ther they will have *spiritual*, or *carnal*, *eternal* or *transitory* Joys. And our work is to perswade them to make that *choice* which will be their Happiness if we can prevail, and which eternal Joy depends upon: whether we come to them in *sickness* or in *health*, *this is our business* with them. A man that is ready to be *drowned*, is not *at leisure* for a *song* or *dance*; And a man that is ready to be *damned*, methinks should not find himself at *leisure* to hear a man shew his wit and reading only, if not his folly and malice against a life of Holiness; Nor should you think that suitable to such mens case, that doth not evidently tend to save them. But, alas, how often have we heard such sermons, as tend more to *diversion* than *direction*; to fill their minds with other matters, and find men something else to think on, lest they should study themselves, and know their misery! And whereas there may be so much ingenuity in the sinner as to perceive that the discourse of idle tongues, or the reading of a Romance is unsuitable to one in his condition; and therefore will not by such toyes as these, be called off from the consideration of his ways; A *preacher* that seems to *speak religiously*, by a sapeless,

dry, impertinent discourse thats called *a sermon*, may more *plausibly* and *easily* divert him: And his conscience will more quietly suffer him to be taken off the necessary care of his salvation, by something that is *like it*, and pretends to *do the work as well*, then by the *grosser* avocations, or the scorns of fools: And he will more tamely be turned from *Religion*, by something that is called *Religion*, and which he hopes may serve the turn, then by open wickedness, or impious defiance of God and Reason. But how oft do we hear applauded Sermons, which force us in compassion to mens souls to think [*O what is all this to the opening a sinners heart unto himself, & shewing him his unregenerate state?* Whats this to the conviction of a self-deluding soul, that is passing unto Hell with the confident expectations of Heaven! To the opening of mens eyes, and turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God! whats *this* to *shew* men their *undone condition*, and the absolute necessity of Christ and of renewing grace! what is in this to lead men up from earth to heaven, and to acquaint them with the unseen world, and to help them to the life of faith and love, and to the mortifying and the pardon of their sins? How little

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skil have many *miserable* preachers, in the searching of the heart, and helping men to know themselves, whether Christ be in them, or whether they be reprobates? and how little *care* and *diligence* is used by them to call men to the tryal, and help them in the examining and judging of themselves, as if it were a work of no necessity! *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace, saith the Lord,* Jer. 6. 14. And Ezek. 13. 10, 11, 12. *Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying Peace and there was no peace, and one built up a wall, and lo others dawbed it with untempered morter, say to them that dawb it with untempered morter that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing showre, and ye O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it: Lo when the wall is falln, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the dawbing wherewith ye dawbed it?*]

It is a plain and terrible passage, Prov. 24. 24. *He that saith to the wicked, Thou art Righteous, him shall the people curse; natives shall abhor him,*] Such *injustice* in a *Judge* or *witnesses* is *odious*, that determine but in order to *temporal* rewards or punishments: (*Lev.* 19. 15. *Prov.* 18. 5.

& 28. 21.) But in a *meſſenger* that profeſſeth to ſpeak to men in the *name* of God, and in the *ſtead* of Jeſus Chriſt, when the determination hath reſpect to the *conſciences* of men, and to their *endleſs joy* or *torment*, how odious and horrid a crime muſt it be eſteemed to perſwade the *wicked* that he is *Righteous*, or to ſpeak that which *tendeth* to *perſwade him* of it though not in open plain expreſſions! what *perfidious* dealing is this againſt the Holy God! what an abuſe of our Redeemer, that *his* pretended *meſſengers* ſhall make him ſeem to judge *clean contrary* to his *Holineſs*, and to his *Law*, and to the *Judgement* which indeed he paſſeth and will paſs on all that live and die unſanctified! What vile deceit, and cruelty againſt the ſouls of men, are ſuch Preachers guilty of, that would make them believe that all is *well* with them, or that their ſtate is *ſafe* or *tolerable*, till they muſt *find* it otherwiſe to their woe! when *diſeaſed* ſouls have but a ſhort and limited time allowed them for their cure, that a man ſhall come to them, as in the *name* of their *Phyſition*, and tell them that they are *pretty well*, and need not make ſo much ado about the buſineſs, and thus keep them from their *only help* till it be *too late!* what

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shame, what punishment can be too great for such a wretch? when the *neglect* and *making light* of Christ and his salvation, is the common road to Hell, *Heb.* 2. 3. *Matth.* 22. 5. and *most men* perish because they *value not* and *use not* the necessary means of their recovery; for a man in the name of a *minister of the Gospel*, to cheat them into such undervaluings and neglects, as are like to prove their *condemnation*: what is this but to play the *Minister of Satan*, and to do *his work*, in the name and garb of a *minister of Christ*? It is damnable treachery against Christ and against the peoples souls to *hide* their *misery* when it is *your office* to reveal it; and to let people deceive themselves in the matters of Salvation, and not to labour diligently to undeceive them; and to see them live upon *presumption* and *ungrounded hopes*, and not to labour with faithful plainess to acquaint them with their need of *better hopes*. But some go *further*, and more *openly* act the part of *Satan*, by *reproaching* the most faithful servants of the Lord, and labouring to bring the people into a conceit that *seriousness* and *carefulness* in the matters of God and our salvation, are but *hypocrisie* and *unnecessary strictness*: And in their company

and converse they put so much countenance on the ungodly, and cast so much secret or open scorn upon those that would live according to the Scriptures, as hardeneth multitudes in their impenitency. O dreadful reckoning to these unfaithful shepherds, when they must answer for the ruine of their miserable flocks! how great will *their damnation* be, which must be aggravated by the damnation of so many others! When the question is, *How come so many souls to perish?* the answer must be, Because they set light by Christ and Holiness which should have saved them: *But what made them set light by Christ and Holiness?* It was their deceitful confidence that they had so much part in Christ and holiness, as would suffice to save them, though indeed they were unsanctified strangers unto both. They were not practically acquainted with their necessities. *But how came they to continue thus ignorant of themselves till it was too late?* Because they had teachers that kept them strange to the nature of true holiness, and did not labour publikely and privately to convince them of their undone condition, and to drive them to Christ that by him they might have life. Woe to such Teachers that ever they were born,

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that must then be found under the guilt of such perfidiousness & cruelty! Had they ever felt themselves, what it is to be pursued by the Law and conscience, and with broken hearts to cast themselves on Christ as their only hope and refuge, and what it is to be pardoned, and saved by him from the wrath of God, and what it is to be sanctified and to be sensible of all his Love, they would take another course with sinners, and talke of sin, and Christ, and holiness at other rates, and not deceive their people with themselves.

Direct. 1. My first *Direction* therefore to you is in *order to the knowledge of your selves*, that *if it be possible, you will live under a faithful, soul-searching, skilful Pastor, and that you will make use of his publike and personal help, to bring you and keep you in continual acquaintance with your selves.*

As there is a *double use* of *Physicians*; one *General*, to teach men the *common Principles* of *Physick*, and read them *Lectures* of the nature of *diseases*, and their *causes* and *remedies*; and the other *particular*, to *apply* these common precepts to each individual person as they need; So is there a *double use* of *ministers* of the Gospel; One

to *deliver publikely* the *common doctrines* of Chriſtianity concerning mans *ſin* and *miſery*, and the *remedy*, &c. and the other to help people in the *perſonal application* of all this to themſelves. And they that take up only with the former, deprive themſelves of half the benefit of the miniſtry.

1. In *publike* how *skilful* and *diligent* ſhould we be, in opening the hearts of ſinners to themſelves! The Pulpit is but our candleſtick, from which we ſhould diffuſe the *holy Light* into all the Aſſembly: Not ſpeaking the *ſame things* of all that are before us, as if it were our work *only to trouble men*, or *only to comfort them*: but as the *ſame Light* will ſhew every man the things which he beholdeth in *their varieties* and *differences*; (we ſee by the ſame ſun a man to be a man, and a beaſt to be a beaſt, and a bird to be a bird;) ſo the *ſame word* of truth which we deliver, muſt be ſo *diſcovering* and *diſcriminating*, as to manifeſt the *ungodly* to be *ungodly*, and the *carnal* to be *carnal*, the *worldling* to be a *worldling*; the *hypocrite* to be an *hypocrite*, and the enemies of holineſs to be as they are; and the *ſincere* to be *ſincere*; and the *renewed ſoul* to be *indeed renewed*.

renewed. The *same light* must shew the *excellency of sanctification*, and *the filthiness of sin*: the *glory* of the *Image of Christ*, and the *deformity* of that *spiritual death* which is its privation. It must shew the *Righteous* to be *more excellent then his neighbour*, Prov. 12, 26. and help men to *discern between the righteous and the wicked*; *between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*, Mal. 3. 18. we must not be like the miserable ungodly preachers, that cannot describe the state of *grace* with clearness and feelingly, because they *never knew it*: or that dare not discover the unsanctified lest they *detect themselves*, nor judge themaccordidg to their office, lest they *condemn themselves*; and that preach to the ungodly as if all were well with them; and they dare not awaken the consciences of others, lest they should *awaken* and *affright their own*: and therefore are ready to scorn at all distinguishing preachers, and to take the discovery of regeneration to be but the boasting of hypocrisie, as if he that would *differ from the most*, or did pretend to the *special priviledges of the Saints*, did but as the Pharise, *thank God that he is not like other men*; or say, *Stand by, I am more holy then thou*: And if these preachers could

could prove that *all men ſhall be ſaved* that will but *ſay* that they are Chriſtians, they might then have hope of being ſaved themſelves, without that ſerious piety which they ſo diſtaſte. No wonder therefore if they preach in the language of *Corah*, Numb. 16. 3. *Ye take too much upon you, ſeeing all the Congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift you up your ſelves above the Congregation of the Lord!*] But the Lord ſaith [*If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou ſhalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them,*] Jer. 15. 19. If you love not *differencing preaching*, *make* no *difference* from the true members of Chriſt by *your hypocriſie* or *ungodly living*; *be ſuch* as *they*, and *we* ſhall not *difference* you from them. Read but the firſt Pſalm, and the fifteenth Pſalm, and the third of *John*, and the eighth to the Romans, and the firſt Epiſtle of *John*, and then tell me whether the Scripture be not a *differencing word*, condemning ſome, and juſtifying others, and ſhewing the *true ſtate* of the *difference* betwixt them. What is there *no difference* between the heirs of *Heaven* and *Hell*? Or is the *difference* no *more* then *that* one

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hath the name of a Christian, and not the other? or that one had the hap to be born where the Gospel was Received, and Christianity was the Religion of the Countrey, and the other the unhappiness to be born where it was not known? O no, when the dreadful differencing day is come, men shall find that there was *another kind* of *difference*, between the *way* of *Life* and of *death*: When many shall say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works!* to whom Christ will profess, *I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work iniquity*, Matth. 7. 22, 23. When *many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom of heaven; but the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*] Matth. 8. 11, 12. what a *difference* will appear between those that *now* converse *together*, and sit here in the same seats, between whom the *world* that judgeth by the *out side*, discerns but *little* or *no difference*? When those things shall be executed that are written in *Matth.* 25, and 2 *Thes.* 1. O what a *difference* will

will then appear! when of thoſe that were in the ſame Church, the ſame houſe, the ſame ſhop, the ſame bed, *One ſhall be taken, and the other left*: and the *felicity* that was *hid* in the *ſeed of Grace*, ſhall *ſhine forth* to the aſtoniſhment of the world, in the *fulneſs* of eternal *Glory!*

I know Preachers are ordinarily *hated* that thus *difference* between the *Godly* and *ungodly*; the very *names* of *difference* are matter of *ſcorn* to guilty ſouls, becauſe they imply the matter of *their terror*. I have oft noted this with admiration, in the ſucceſs of Chriſts own doctrine upon the Jews, *Luk.* 4. 18, 19, 22. when he had ſo preached the Goſpel, as that he had the teſtimony of the multitude that *wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*, yet *ſome* were cavilling and believed not, and *v.* 25, 26, 27. he ſaith [*I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, when the Heaven was ſhut up three years*, &c. *But unto none of them, was Elias ſent ſave unto Sarepta a City of Sidon, to a woman that was a widow: And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Elizeus the prophet: and none of them was cleanſed ſaving Naaman the Syrian*:] But how was this *difference-*

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ing doctrine of Christ *entertained*, by the Jews? It is said v. 28. 29. *All they in the Synagogue when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the City, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their City was built, that they might might cast him down headlong.* Read it and consider, *what moved* these men to so much rage against *Christ himself* for preaching this doctrine, which restrained the fruit of the Gospel to *a few*; and then you will not wonder, if those preachers that imitate Christ in this, be used no better then their Master.

But let Ministers know that *this is their duty*, to shew every man *himself*, *his deeds*, and *state* as indeed they are: And let Christians *choose* and *love* such Ministers. Choose not the Glass that makes you *fairest*, but which is *truest*, and representeth you to *your selves* as *God* accounteth you, whether he do it with more *eloquence* or less; with smoother or with rougher *language*; hear him if you may, that will best acquaint you with the truth of your condition, and choose not those that speak not to the heart.

2. And when you have *heard* the best, the clearest, the most searching Preacher, do not

not think that *now you can do all the rest of the work your selves* : and that you have *no further* need of help : But make use of their *more particular personal advice* ; not *medlesly*, but in these following cases.

1. In case that after *your most diligent self-examination*, you are yet at *uncertainty* and *doubt*, whether you are *truly sanctified* or *not*. The setling of your states for all eternity, and the well-grounding of your Hopes and Comforts, is a matter of such unspeakable moment, as that you should not remain in *carelesse*, *negligent* uncertainty, while God hath provided you any further means that may be used for assurance. Yea if you *were not* troubled with *doubting*, yet if you have *opportunity* of opening your Evidences to a judicious faithful Minister or friend, I think it may be worth your labour, for the *Confirmation* of the peace and comforts which you have. You cannot make *too sure* of everlasting Happiness.

2. And not only in the first setling of your Peace, but also when any notable assault or dangerous temptation shall afterward shake it, which you cannot overcome without assistance, it is seasonable

nable to betake your selves to the Physi-cion.

3. And also in case of any dangerous *lapse* or *declining* that hath brought you into a state of *darkness*. The *sick* and *wounded must* have help: *They* are not sufficient for themselves.

4. Also in case of any *particular corrup-tion*, or *temptation*, your particular sinful inclinations may (cautiously) be open-ed to a faithful Guide, that by his prudent and lively counsel you may be strengthen-ed.

If you say, *To what end do Ministers preach to me, and why do I hear them open-ing the natures of Grace and of Hypocrisie, if I cannot judge of my self by the doctrine which they preach?* I answer, 1. You may and must *judge your selves* by the *publike common helps*, as far as you are *able*: But a *personal applying help*, added unto this, is a *further* advantage. And humility should teach you, not to think better of your understandings then there is cause; nor to think you are so wise as to need but *one* help, when God hath provided you *two*: or that you need but the *lesser*, when he hath provided you a *greater*. And doth not your own experience convince you?

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Do you not find that after the beſt publike preaching you are yet *in doubt*, and at a *loſs* about your ſpiritual ſtate, and therefore that you have need of further help?

2. I further anſwer you: There is ſo great a *diverſity* of particular *circumſtances* in the caſes of particular perſons, that a great deal of help is neceſſary to moſt, to paſs a right *judgement*, when they do underſtand both the *Law*, and the *fact*. Will you think it enough that you have the *ſtatutes* of the Land, and the *Law-books* to judge of all your own caſes by? Or will you not think that you have alſo need of the Counſel of the wiſeſt *Lawyer* (in your weightieſt caſes) to help you to judge of your *cauſe* by the particular application of the Law to it? So in Phyſick, who is ſo fooliſh, as to think that by the help of the moſt learned *Book*, or approved *Receipts* he is able to be his own Phyſicion, without any more particular advice? You muſt be long in ſtudying Law or Phyſick before you can underſtand them ſo well as thoſe that have made them the ſtudy and buſineſs of their lives. It is not *having* or *reading* a *Book* only, or hearing a *Lecture* of them, that can make you as underſtanding as the maſters of the Profeſſion;

Profession; and also to have all passages *at hand* that must be observed in the judging of your Cause. So is it in matters of the *soul*. When *you* have heard much, and understand much, you cannot in modesty think that all the sense of Scripture, about those points, is known as exactly to you, as to your most judicious Teachers; and that you are as able at once to see all the passages of the *word*, and of the *fact*, as may enable you to pass so clear a judgement on it. Perhaps you will say, that you know your own hearts and actions better then they do. I answer, You do so, or should do so, as to the *matter of fact*: and it is *you* that *they* must know it from: And yet when you have done, you may not be able to judge of your *State* by those *acts* which you say you know: *You* must shew the *Lawyer* all your *evidences*: *He* cannot see them, till *you* shew them him: and yet *when* he seeth them, he can *judge* of them whether they are good or bad, and of your title by them, better then *you* can that have the keeping of them; because he better understands the *Law*: The Physician *feeleth* not *your pain*, nor *knoweth* it till *you tell* it him: And yet when *you* have *told* it him, *he* knows bet-

ter then *you* what it *signifieth*, and whether it tendeth, and whether be curable or not, and what must cure it.

But perhaps you will say, that *when you have gone to Ministers, and opened your case to them, they cannot resolve you, but you are still in doubt.*

I answer, 1. Perhaps when they *have resolved* them, yet you *would* not *be resolved.* Have they not told you the *truth* and you would not *believe* it? Or directed you to *Remedies* which you *would* not *use*? They cannot when they have told you the truth, *compell* you to *believe* it; *nor* when they have told you what will do the cure, they cannot *make* you *use it* if you refuse.

2. And what if the *nature* of the *disease* be *obstinate*, and will not be cured *easily* and *at once*, but with *time* and *diligence* and *patience*? Will you therefore think the *means* are *vain*? Must you at *once*, or in a *short time*, be resolved, and delivered from all your doubts, about your title to *eternal life*, or else will you cast off *all advice*? should you do so by your *bodies*, you may know what were like to be the issue: should your *children* learn thus of their *teachers*, they were like to make unhappy Schollars.

Schollars. As you will not have done with *Christ*, if he cure you not at *once*, nor give over *praying* if you have not all your *desires* at *once* (if you love your selves) So you must not have done with the *Counsel* of your *Guides*, if they satisfie not your doubts at *once*: As you cease not *hearing them* in *publike*, though you have *still* your *doubtings*; so why should you cease advising with them *personally* upon that account? Use Gods means, and be thankful, if *by degrees* they do the cure, and prevail *at last*.

Object. *But I find it is God only that can speak peace; and therefore it is vain to hang on men.*

I answer, God speaketh by his *word* and *spirit*: His *word* is to be *delivered*, *expounded*, and *applyed* to you by his *Ministers*: If therefore you will have it *from God*, you must not refuse his *own* appointed ordinary *means*. The *Spirit* comforteth by the *promise*: As in *Conversion* God useth not to do it by the *spirit*, *without*, but *in*, and *by* the *Ministery of the word*; so also in all our directions, and satisfaction and comfort afterwards. As he that will run from the Ministry of the word, because it is *God* that must *convert*, doth indeed run from

God, and is not like to be *converted*: ſo is it in point of *aſſurance*, and *conſolation*. The Teachers of the Church [are *to be accounted of as the Miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 1. *by whom* the people *have believed*, 1 Cor. 3. 5. *not having dominion over* their *faith, but being helpers of their joy*, 2 Cor. 1. 24. who *are comforted in all their tribulations, that they might be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themſelves are comforted of God*, *v.* 4. They are to be *faithful* and *wiſe ſtewards, whom the Lord maketh Rulers over his houſhold to give them their portion of meat in due ſeaſon*, Luk. 12. 42. Thus Chriſt hath given *authority to his ſervants*, and *appointed to every man his work*, Mark. 13. 34. and *given Paſtors and Teachers to his Church*, for *the perfecting of the Saints for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the ſon of God, to a perfect man*, Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. Theſe therefore being *Chriſts officers*, and *this* their *appointed work*, we muſt receive ſo much of Gods mercies by *their hands*, as belongeth to *their office* to adminiſter. [*If there be a meſ-*

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ſenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto man his uprightneſs; then God is gracious unto him, and ſaith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ranſome: Job. 33. 23, 24.

So that you ſee it is *Gods way* to *ſhew to man his uprightneſs*, and to ſpeak peace to ſouls by his *meſſengers* and *interpreters* that are *fitted* and *authorized* thereto.

Object. *But it is but few that are able thus to diſcuſs the caſe of unſetled doubting ſouls, and to give them clear and ſafe directions, that may ſave them both from preſumption and deſpair: In many places the Miniſters are ſenſeleſs of theſe things, and unacquainted with the concernments and works of conſcience, and have nothing to ſay to us, unleſs to deride us as ſcrupulous and preciſe, and bid us not trouble our heads about ſuch matters, ſeeing God is merciful, and Chriſt dyed for ſinners: They will diſcourſe with us long enough about news, or worldly buſineſſes, or opinions, or controverſies; but when we open to them the ſtate of our ſouls, and deſire their advice for the making our calling and election ſure, they have no ſenſe or ſavour of ſuch diſcourſe:*

And many ministers that are truly Conscientious, are yet so unskilful and so weak, that we have no encouragement to acquaint them with our state.

To this I answer: It cannot be denyed but all this is too true; and it is matter of lamentation, and must send us to God with the old petition which Christ himself hath put into our mouths, Math. 9. 37, 38. [*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*]

But consider that this is no *wonder*, or *unusual* thing: For all this, there is no nation under heaven that hath more able faithful Ministers of Christ, then are *in these Nations*. Alas how much of the Church is guided by meer *ignorant Readers!* and how much by *superstitious deceivers!* Did you know the case of the poor Christians in the Ethiopian, the Greek, and the Roman Churches, you would bless God that it is so well with us: Even when the Church was in a *narrower* room, yet God complained, *Jer.* 12. 10. [*Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard: they have trodden my Portion under foot: they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness: They have*

have made it desolate : and being desolate it mourneth unto me :] And Jer. 23. 1, 2. [*Wo be to the Pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my Pasture, saith the Lord : therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the Pastors that feed my people : Ye have scatted my flock and driven them away, and have not visited them : behold I will visit on you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.*] *And I will set up shepherds over them that shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed*] Then was the Church fain to take up this lamentation, Jer. 10. 19, 20. 21. *Woe is me, my hurt ! for my wound is grievous : But I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it : my tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken : my children are gone forth of me, and they are not : there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains : For the Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord : therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.*]

But the voice of *healing mercy* saith [*Only acknowledge thine iniquity*, &c. *Turn O back sliding children*, &c. *and I will give you Pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and*

underſtanding,] Jer. 3. 13, 14, 15.

You ſee in all other profeſſions (that *require not ſupernatural illumination*) there are but *few* that attain to *excellency*: It is but in *few* that *Nature* layeth the foundation, or giveth that capacity, to be excellent, which Grace doth elevate and improve.

Take therefore the advice of the *ableſt* you *can get*: If *moſt Phyſicions* are *weak* and *ignorant*, do not therefore caſt off *all*, nor yet caſt your ſelves upon one that is like to *kill* you, becauſe he is your *neighbour*. I will not perſwade you to go *always* to the *Miniſter of your Pariſh*, to open the caſe of your ſouls, be he *fit* or *unfit*: but to the *fitteſt* that you can have acceſs to: The Papiſts themſelves will give men leave to chooſe others for their *Confeſſors*. Where there is *moſt* of the *heavenly illumination*, and holy skill in the matters of the ſoul; where there is the *ſoundeſt* and *exacteſt judgement*, joyned with *experience* and *tender compaſſion*, and *faithful plainеſs*, and *cautelous ſecreſie*, *there* open your hearts if you have opportunity, and take the help of ſuch faithful counſellors to acquaint you *with your ſelves*.

Object.

Object. *But such Ministers being few, and having more of greater work then they can turn them to, are not to be spoken with as oft as my necessity requireth help.*

Answ. Use then the best that are at leisure; And it is not *only Ministers* that you must use, but any other Christian *friend*, that hath such *abilities* and *qualifications*, as fit them to assist you; *Whosoever* hath the *Light*, refuse not to *come to it*; Gods gifts and graces may be helpful to you in a *Parent*, a *husband*, a *neighbour*, and not *only* in a *Minister*.

Quest. *But how far may a dark and doubting person take up and rest in the judgement of a Minister or of others, about the state of his soul, when he is not satisfied himself?*

Answ. This Question is of very great use, and therefore the more carefully to be resolved; I shall answer it therefore, 1. *Negatively*, and 2. *Affirmatively*.

1. No *mans* judgement of your state is to be taken as *absolutely infallible* or *divine*: nor is *man* to be believed *as God* is with a *divine belief*: when they tell you, that [*If you are regenerate, you are justified*] then they do but tell you what *God* hath

hath told you, and therefore this is to be taken as of *infallible certainty*, not as it is *their* word, but as it is *Gods*: so also when they tell you, that [*if you are unconverted you are not forgiven*] But when they tell you, that [*you are converted or unconverted, pardoned or unpardoned,*] this judgement is not to be taken as *infallible* or *Divine*.

2. For the bare matter of *fact* (*whether you Repent or not*; whether you had *rather be Holy* or *unholy*, &c.) there is no Minister that can know your Heart so well as you your selves may know it: except in case when *Melancholy* or *passion*, or a *weakness of understanding* on one side, or a *wilfulness* of *presumption* on the other side, doth make men judge of their *own* condition quite contrary to the *evidence* that appeareth in their *lives* to *others*.

3. It is not safe to *rest* on the *judgement* of one that is either *an enemy* or *stranger* to the workings of a careful troubled soul; or of one that is drunk with any *heresie*, or fond of any *private opinion* of his *own*, and layeth out his *zeal* to form people into his *opinion*, as if the life of *Religion* lay in that: Nor yet of a *weak unskilful* man.

4. It

4. It is not safe for you to *rest much* in the *Judgement* of one that *knows you not*, and is not *acquainted* (by himself, or by the *report* of others, or some good evidence) of the bent and manner of your lives, but must judge only by the *present expressions* of your own mouths.

5. It is not safe for you to rest on the judgement of any *one singular person*, when the judgement of *most* of *your judicious acquaintance* is contrary to it. So much for the *Negative*,

2. *Affirmatively* I answer, 1. By a *Divine faith* you are bound to believe all the *promises* of *Scripture* that your *Pastor* (or any other) shall acquaint you with.

2. As a *Disciple of Christ*, you are bound to *Learn* the meaning of *those Promises* (and other passages of the Scripture) from your *Teachers* daily authorized to instruct you: And with such a *Humane belief*, as a *scholler* oweth to his *Teacher* in *Arts* or *Sciences*, you are bound to *Believe* your *Teachers* concerning the meaning of the promises, in cases wherein you are *unable your selves* to understand the word by its *proper light* and *evidence*, as well as they; and in case you see no *evidence* of *falshood* in their exposition, nor have

have any *ſpecial reaſon* to diſtruſt them. He that will believe nothing that his *Teacher* telleth him in order to his *own underſtanding*, ſhall *never underſtand* by *Teaching*: If you know as much as he already, you *need* no *Teacher*: If you do not, you muſt *believe* him, or elſe you can never *learn* of him. But this is not to take him for *omniſcient*, or *infallible* in *himſelf*, but to credit him as a *man*.

3. You are bound, when he judgeth of your *particular caſe*, upon *your opening* to him the *matter of fact*, to allow him *ſo much credit* as is due to the *proportion of his underſtanding*. *You tell* him how you *feel your hearts affected*, and what the *actions* of your *lives* have been; when *you* have *told* it him, *he* judgeth by *Gods word*, whether this be a ſtate of ſaving grace which you deſcribe, or not; if upon *much ſtronger parts*, or *longer ſtudy*, and more *experience*, he know more of the *meaning* of the *word*, and of the nature of *grace*, and ſo be abler to *judge* then *you*, modeſty requireth that you do in that *meaſure* ſubmit your underſtanding unto his, and believe him according to the meaſure of his skil, upon ſuppoſition that you deceive him not in your information. Even as you will *believe* a

Lawyer

Lawyer about your *Title* to your *lands*, when you have shewed him your *evidence*; or a *Physician* about your *disease*, when you have told him what you feel (as I said before.)

4. You are bound to add also all *that credit* that his *Honesty* and *fidelity* requireth, if he be a godly man, unwilling to deceive you.

5. And you are bound to add so *much Belief* as in the case is due to a *stander by* that is out of the *dust*, and is not *blinded* by *self-love*, or *partiality*, or *passions*, or any *selfish bias*, as most men are to themselves.

6. If you are *darkened by melancholly*, or any other weakening distemper, that maketh you uncapable of judging for your selves, you are bound to allow another *so much credit*, as the advantage of *his sounder understanding*, and more *composed judgement* doth require. If every *Child*, or *sick person* will *believe* no body that doth not say as they, their self-conceitedness and their distrust of others will be their wrong.

7. In the *manner* of *reception*, you are bound to do all this with such a *submission* as belongeth to an *officer of Christ*: Not that you are to *believe* any *falshood*, that he bringeth

bringeth you, and fathereth upon Christ; nor to put out your own eyes, and see with his: But to learn of him to understand your selves, and receive what he bringeth you according to his office: As a child is bound to submit to any Tutor or Teacher that the Parents shall set over him. The *same truth* must be received as from a *double obligation*, when besides its *proper evidence*, it is delivered by a *messenger of Christ*.

8. You may yet *more boldly* and confidently give credit to the judgement of such a Minister of Christ, when he is *not singular*, but speaks according to the *concurrent judgement* of the *generality* of *able experienced men* Modesty will forbid you to think your selves wiser then all the able Ministers about you.

9. You have the less reason to suspect his judgement, when you may be sure that he is *not perverted* by any *self-interest*, or *self-respect*, and bawketh not the truth for fear of *displeasing you*, or bringing any *discredit* or *suffering* on *himself*.

10. Lastly, when *all these things concur*, you may with the *greater* confidence rest upon his Judgement. And though still he is but an *imperfect man*, and no *absolute certainty* of *your estate* can be had from his *bare*

bare judgement (though from his *doctrine* and the *Effects* and *Signs* there may,) yet such a Judgement, should weigh very much with you, to the raising of *fear* and *care* in the *ungodly*, and for the *quieting* of a troubled soul.

Let us a little now *apply* this *Direction* to both parties. Beloved Hearers, if any of you can look before you to eternity, and do not with awakened thoughts conclude, that all probable means should be used in time, to make sure of your final Justification at the dreadful day of God, that man wants either the *faith of a Christian*, or the *feeling* of a *considerate man*. Are you all desirous to be *sure before hand*, what sentence shall pass upon you *then*, or are you not? If you *are*, come on, and let me make a motion that you cannot reasonably refuse: The busines is of unspeakable consequence: To be *deceived*, may be to be *undone* for ever: Will you advise with those that *God hath appointed* to give you advice in so great a case? Well then! will you go and faithfully open your state (supposing you have the need before expressed) to some *able faithful Minister* of Christ? Not to an *ignorant*, or a *carnal*, *unexperienced* man; but unto once that is skilled in spiritual affairs, and

that

that will be faithful to you, and deal with that ſerious gravity and reverence as beſeems him that is helping to prepare a ſoul for the bar of Chriſt: Will you (if you never did it) tell him, whether ever you were *convinced* of *your ſin* and *miſery*; and whether ever you ſaw the *need of Chriſt?* and whether you have *loathed your ſelves* for your iniquities? and *fled to Chriſt* as your only refuge from the wrath of God? and have *turned away* with *reſolution* from your former ungodly careleſs life? and have *changed* your *company*, your *buſineſs*, and your *delights*? Whether you make it your *chief buſineſs* to *pleaſe God*, and to *ſave your ſouls?* and reſolve to take up with the *hopes* of *Heaven* as your *only portion*,, and not to hazzard it, for any *worldly intereſt*, or *fleſhly pleaſure* whatſoever? whether in *your eyes a vile perſon be contemned, but you love and honour them that fear the Lord*? Tell *theſe* and other ſuch particulars of your ſtate to your faithful Paſtors; Anſwer them to theſe, and ſuch like queſtions, and then take their judgement (with the cautions before expreſſed) of your ſpiritual ſtate. Heare what they will tell you of it. Might not this courſe convince thee of thy miſerable

miſerable ſtate, that never hadſt any ſuch evidences as theſe to ſhew! and might it not awaken thee in time, to bethink thee of a ſafer courſe! Go to any faithful Miniſter in the world and tell him the *plain truth*, that *yet* thou art a *ſecret fornicator* or *drunkard*, or *pot-companion*, or *fleſh-pleaſer* in ſome ſenſual way; or if thou ſinneſt not ſo groſly, that yet thou art a *formal hypocrite*, and haſt a *ſecret enmity* to thoſe that are *moſt ſeriouſly Religious*, and live the moſt heavenly lives, and that thou art thy ſelf a ſtranger to all the foreſaid paſſages of ſanctification; and I dare aſſure thee that he will tell thee if thou art thus indeed thou art in the *gall of bitterneſs* & the *bond of iniquity*, and muſt be ſpeedily *renewed* and *ſanctified* and *juſtified*, or thou art undone for ever. I tell thee, there is not a man that is worthy the name of a Miniſter in all the world, but will paſs this judgement on the condition of thy ſoul. And yet wilt thou bear it out with a ſenſeleſs heart, a ſeared conſcience, and a brazen face, and ſtill live as careleſly as if all were well with thee! what is thy ſoul of no more worth? Is it ſo ſmall a matter with thee what becometh of thee? Or is the judgement of able faithful Miniſters in the way of their *own office*, of no

more regard with thee? What not when *all* the foresaid requisites concur! They shew thee the plain *word of God* against thee; and that his *Threatning* contains the *virtual sentence* of *thy condemnation*; They are by *office* the *Interpreters* of the *Law of God* to you; It hath been the *study* of their *lives*: The matters in question are such as they have had *experience* of in *themselves* and *others*: They have judged as hardly of *themselves* and of their *own case*, as now they do of *yours* when *theirs* was the *same* as *yours* is *now*. Do they pronounce *you miserable* as being strangers to the spirit of Christ? So they *did* by *themselves* when they saw their sin: and therefore they are *impartial*: They have had before them multitudes, (alas too many) in *your case*: And you will regard the judgement of a *Physicion* that hath had *many hundreds* in hand that had the *same disease* as you. They are men that are not *willing* to *deceive* you. They *deny themselves* in telling you of your danger: They know that *smoother words* would *please* you better: And they have *natures* that *desire* mens *love* and favour, rather then *displeasure* and ill will. They are more *impartial* then *you* are, and have not *your self-interest* and *passion* to blind

blind them : They are not abused in their judgement by the temptations of evil company, or of worldly fleshly things as you are ; For these temptations more hinder us from judging *our selves* then *other men*. They are the *messengers of Christ* appointed to *give to each their portion* : and should not their *judgement* be regarded in the *business committed* to *their trust* ? And it is not *one man* or *two*, or a *hundred* only, that are of this mind : Open thy case to *all the judicious faithful Ministers* in the *land*, or in the *world*, and open it *truly*, and they will *all* tell thee that *if thou die without converting sanctifying grace, thou art lost for ever* ; and that all the world cannot save thee from the everlasting wrath of God. Try as many of them as you will, and see if *all* of them tell you not the *same thing*. And is all this *nothing* to thee, presumptuous sinner, that in the judgement of all the most able faithful Ministers of Christ, thy soul should be in a state of death ? Art thou wiser then all the best and wisest, in the matters of their own profession ? If *all* the *Physicions* in the countrey should tell thee, that *thou hast a disease that will certainly be thy death, unless thou take some one effectual medicine in time*, I think thou wouldest not

ſlight their judgement, and ſay, They are too cenſorious, that thou knoweſt thy condition better then they! I think it would affright thee to ſeek after the remedy. And why ſhould not the judgement of the *faithful Miniſters*, about the ſtate of thy ſoul, be ſo far regarded, as to awaken thee to a more careful enquiry, and ſtir up a *preventing and remedying* fear? If the judgement of Chriſts officers be not regardable, then there is no matter of terror in *excommunication*; nor no matter of comfort in *Miniſterial Abſolution*.

O the madneſs of a hardened ſinner! that when he ſheweth by the *fruits* of an *ungodly life* that he is a ſtranger to ſanctification, and liveth in the ſins which the Scripture threatneth damnation to, and hath no evidence of true converſion to ſhew, will yet be confident of pardon and ſalvation, let God and all his Miniſters ſay what they will againſt it! and will rather be *offended* with his ſpiritual Phyſicions, for telling him of the danger of his ſtate, and rail at them as if they did him wrong, then he will ſee his danger and prevent his miſery! Let ſuch a one hear the word of God, if he have eares to hear, Deut. 29. 19, 20, 21: [*Leſt there ſhould be among you a root that beareth*

beareth gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousie shall smoak against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven, & the Lord shall separate him to evil, &c.]

And on the other side, Is there any soul among you that in *doubts*, and *trouble*, hath opened his case to the faithful Ministers of Christ, and *their judgement* is, that *your state is safe?* Is this the judgement, not only of the *weakest*, but the *wisest*; not only of *strangers*, but of those that *know you* best; not only of *one* or *two*, but of *all* or *most* of the *judicious Ministers*, that ever you opened you case to? even of the most *honest* and *impartial*, that would not flatter you nor deceive you? Yea and perhaps, when desertions, or Melancholy, or passion, or ignorance do make *you unmeet* to judge of your selves: And doth all this seem nothing to you? or a small matter? It is *not nothing*: It is *not small*: I confess it is no ground of *cer-*

tainty: They are but *men*: It is a *humane teſtimony*: But yet it is a teſtimony, that may weigh down *many* of *your own ſurmiſes*, and take off much of your *diſtreſſing fears*; and may give much *eaſe* to troubled ſouls, while they are ſeeking after *ſurer knowledge*: It is a ground of comfort, not to be *deſpiſed*, or made light of: Till you can come to ſee your *evidences your ſelves*, and to be acquainted with the *indwelling ſpirit* as your *witneſs*, you may much quiet your minds, and take much comfort, in *this judgement* and *witneſs* of the *ſervants of the Lord*, that have a *ſpirit of diſcerning*, and have that *grace* which acquainteth them with the *nature of grace* in others, and that have been *long exerciſed* in the *diſcerning* of mens ſtates: It is *poſſible* an *Hypocrite* (eſpecially one that wilfully giveth them a falſe relation of himſelf) may deceive them: but it is *Probable* that it is not one of many they are deceived in, when they know or have a good deſcription of the Perſon. If in a Law ſuit *all* the *ableſt Lawyers* tell you that your cauſe is good; it is *poſſible* they may be deceived, but it is not *likely*; If in a *Feaver all the ableſt* Phyſicions tell you, the *danger is paſt*, it is *poſſible* yet that they may be *all deceived*: But yet

I think you would take *some comfort* in such a testimony; so should you here: Though the Judgement of Ministers be not *infallible*, it may be much better then your *own*, though about *your selves*: and it may be set against the *jealousies* and *fears* of a disquiet soul, and against abundance of the *molesting suggestions* of the accuser.

I do not by all this draw you to lay too much on man; I advance them not too high, and make them not *Lords of your faith*, but *helpers of your Joy*. I draw you not to any *deceitful course*; nor into any way of *danger* to your *souls*. I bid you not *fully and finally* rest in the *judgement of man*: I bid you not *neglect any means* to come to *fuller knowledge*, and *certainty* of your own sincerity: I bid you not forbear *any means* that tend to the *getting of true grace*: If you *have it* and *know it not*, the *same means* (for the most part) may *increase* it, which you use to *get* it: And if you *have it not*, when it is *thought* you *have it*, the *means* may work it, that that are intended to *increase* it. Do all that you can to Repent, Believe, and Love God, and Live to him, whether you ever did these before, or not: But yet let the judgement of your faithful Pastors, the

officers and experienced servants of the Lord, *keep of despondency* and *despair* that would *disable* you from the *use of means*, and would weaken your hands, and make you sit down in unprofitable complaints, and give up all as hopeless. Let their judgement quiet you in the way of duty; Lean on them in the dark, till you come into the light. Yea be glad that you have so much encouragement and hope, from those that are by Christ appointed to subserve the spirit in the *comforting* as well as the *sanctifying* work, and to *shew to man his uprightness*, and to *say to the Righteous*, *It shall be well with him*, Isa. 3. 10. I tell you, all the wealth of the world, is not worth even *this much* ground of comfort: Live upon *this much*, till by diligent attendance and waiting on the spirit of grace and comfort, you can get higher.

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2. THE second extrinsical Hinderance of self-knowledge, is, *Prosperity* and the *Flattery* that usually attendeth it. The one *disposeth* men to be deceived, and the other putteth the hood over their eyes, and tells them the falshoods which deceive them. When

When men prosper in the world, their minds are lifted up with their estates; and they can hardly believe that they are indeed so *ill* while they feel themselves so *well*; and that so much misery is joyned with so much content and pleasure. They cannot taste the bitterness of their sin, and Gods displeasure, while the sweetness of worldly delights & honours is in their mouths. The Rich man in *Luk.* 16. its like would have given a man but an unwelcome entertainment, that had come to tell him that within a few days or years he should lie in hell, and not be able to get a drop of water to cool his tongue! What need we doubt of that, when his five Brethren that he left on earth behind him, would not be perswaded (to know their danger of those flames, and to use the necessary means to scape them) though one had come to them from the dead! *Luk.* 16. 31. You plead against their *feeling*, when you tell them of their misery, when they *feel* prosperity: Their fleshly appetite and sense, which is in them the reigning faculty, doth tell them they are well and happy: and that which must confute this, and tell them they are miserable, must be an inward sense of the sin and diseases of their souls, and a foreseeing

seeing Faith that must look before them unto eternity, and fetch its proofs from the word of God, and fetch its motives from another world: And alas, they have no such *inward* sense, nor no such *Faith* as can prevail against their their sensual *feeling*. And therefore it is a matter of lamentable difficulty to make a prospering sinner well acquainted with his misery. He is drunken with fleshly pleasures and contentments: And when the drink is in a mans head, you can hardly make him sensible of his misery, though he be a beggar, or a prisoner, or were to die within a week. The Devil is therefore willing to reach his servants as full a cup of prosperity as he can, that their drunkenness may keep them from the true use of their reason; For if they once come to themselves, they will come home to God. When misery brought the Prodigal to himself, he resolveth presently of going to his Father, *Luk.* 15. The bustle of his worldly business, and the chattering vain discourse that is in his ears, and the mirth and sport that takes him up, will not allow him so much of reason as seriously to consider of his souls condition. Alas, when *poor men*, that must labour all day for food, and rayment

ayment, can find *some time* for serious onverse with God and with their Con-ciences: the *Great ones* of the world have no such leisure: How many are going apace towards Hell, and say they cannot have while to bethink themselves what way they are in, or whether it is that they are going! That which they have all their time for, they have no time for, because they have no hearts for it. Prosperity doth so please their flesh, that they can give no heed to conscience or to reason: It doth so charm their minds, and enslave their wills to sense and appetite, that they cannot abide to be so Melancholy as to prepare for death and judgement, or to consider seriously how this will relish with them at the end: nor scare to remember that they *are men*, that should rule their senses, and be ruled by God, and that have another life to live.

And as Prosperity in it self is so great a Hinderance to the knowledge of your selves, so *Flatterers* that are the flies of summer, are always ready to blow upon the prospe-rous, and increase the danger. What miserable men are extolled as wise and vir-tuous and Religious, if they be but Rich and Great! Their vices are masked, or extenuated

extenuated, and made but little humane frailties: Though they were ſwiniſh gluttons or drunkards, or filthy fornicators, or meer fleſh-pleaſing ſenſual bruits, that waſte moſt of their lives in eaſe and ſports, and eating and drinking and ſuch delights; yet with their flatterers all theſe ſhall go for *prudent*, *pious*, *worthy* perſons, if they can but ſeek when they have done, to mock God and their conſciences with ſome lip-ſervice and lifeleſs carcaſs of Religion. O happy men if *God* would judge of them as their *flatterers* do; and would make as ſmall a matter of their wickedneſs, and as great a matter of their out-ſide Hypocritical heartleſs worſhip! But they muſt be greater then men or Angels, and higher then either earth or Heaven, before God will flatter them. When they can make *him* afraid of their high looks or threatnings, or when they can put in Hope of riſing by their preferment, then they may look that he ſhould comply with their paraſites, and complement with his *enemies*, and *juſtifie* the *ungodly*; but not till then. O did they conſider, how little *flattery* doth ſecure them, and how little the Judge of all the world regards their worldly pompe and ſplendor, yea how greatly

their

heir greatneſs doth aggravate their ſin and niſery, they would frown their flatterers out of doors, and call for plain and faithful dealers. Of all the miſeries of worldly greatneſs, his is not the leaſt, that uſually ſuch want he neceſſary bleſſing of a glaſs that will truly ſhew them their faces; of a friend at hand that will deal plainly, and juſtly with their ſouls. *Who* tells them plainly of the odiouſneſs, and bitter fruits of ſin? and of the wrath of God and endleſs miſery? How few ſuch true and faithful friends have they? and what wonder! when it is a carnal inducement that draweth men to follow them: It it is their wealth and honour, and their power to do men good or hurt in outward things, that makes *their friends*: They are attended by theſe flies and waſps, becauſe they carry the honeypot which they love: And God ſaith to his followers, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: If any man Love the world, the Love of the Father is not in him*, 1 Joh. 2. 15. And it is for Love of worldly things (even the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and pride of life, *&c.* which are not of the Father, but of the world, 1 *Joh.* 2. 16.) it is for theſe that great men have their friends and followers for the

the moſt part : And therefore it is plain, that the worſt ſort of men are ordinarily their friends ; For thoſe are the worſt men, that have not the Love of the Father in them, but are the friends of the world, and therefore the enemies of God, *Jam.* 4. 4. And the beſt, though fit to be their trueſt friends, are ſeldom their followers, as knowing that the attractive of the ſenſual world, is a ſhaddow unfit to deceive thoſe that are acquainted with its vanity, and a ſnare unfit to take thoſe that have obſerved how Satan laies and baits the trap, and how they have ſped that have been taken in it. A deſpiſed Chriſt that hath the words of eternal life, is much more followed by men that have the heavenly reliſh. Such gracious ſouls whoſe appetites are not corrupted by the creature and their ſickneſſes, have more mind to flock after a ſpiritual and powerful meſſenger of Chriſt, that talkes to them of his Kingdom and the Righteouſneſs thereof, which they firſt ſeek, then to gape after the preferment and vain glory of proſperity. Chriſt that deſpiſed the offer of all the Kingdoms and Glory of the world, (*Mat* 4. 8, 9.) doth teach his followers to deſpiſe them.

Seeing

Seeing then the ordinary attendants of the prosperous, are the worst of men, that seek themselves, and are purveying for the flesh, what wonder if they be *flatterers*, that have neither skill nor will to speak that unpleasing language of *reproof*, that should make the prosperous *know themselves!* Oh how seldom (or never) do *they hear*, what the *poor* can *hear* from every mouth! If a man of *low degree* be wicked, or offend, his *enemy* dare tell him of it, and his *friend* dare tell him of it, and his *angry neighbour* or *companion* will be sure to tell him of it, and they dare tell him *frequently* till he amend, and tell him *plainly*, and set it home: But if *great ones* be as bad, and need *more help*, as having more temptation, yet alas *they* may sin, and sin again and perish, for any body that will deal faithfully with their souls; except some faithful Minister of Christ, whose plainess is taken but for a thing of course. And usually even *Ministers* themselves, are some of them so unfaithful, and some so fearful, and some so prudently cautelous, that such persons have no such help from *them* to *know themselves*, as the *poorer* sort of people have. If we deal freely with *them*, and set it home, it will be *well taken*; or

if it *offend*, yet offence may easily be born, as bringing no ill consequents to our Ministery: but if we deal so with the great ones of the world, what outcries would it raise, and by what names should we and our preaching be called! If it were not for fear lest some malicious hearers would misunderstand me, and misapply my words, as spoken of those that we are bound to honour, and as tending to diminish the reputation of any of our superiors (which I detest) I should have shewed you all this in Scripture instances. When *Haman* could not bear the omission of one mans obeysance, what wonder if such cannot bear to be spoken to, as indeed they are! Not only an *Ahab* hateth one faithful plain *Michaiah*, because he propheseth not good of him but evil, (1 *King.* 22. 8.) but *Asa* that destroyed Idolatry, can imprison the Prophet that reproveth him for his sin, 2 *Chron.* 16. 10. I will not tell you of the words that were spoken to *Amos* by the Priest of *Bethel*, *Amos* 7. 10, 11, 12, 13. or to the Prophet, 2 *Chron.* 25. 15, 16. lest malice mis-interpret and mis-report me; For it is none of my intent to fix on any particular persons, but to tell you in general, the lamentable disadvantage that the

the great and prosperous have as to the knowledge of themselves: how little plain dealing they have, and how hardly most of them can bear it: though yet I doubt not but it is born and loved by those that have true grace: and that if *David* sin, he can endure to hear from *Nathan* [*Thou art the man*] and this shall befall thee; and an *Eli* can bear the prophesie of *Samuel* and say, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 2. 27. & 3. 17, 18. and an *Hezekiah* can say, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*, 2 King. 20. 19. and *Josiah* can bear the threatnings of *Huldah*, 2 *Chron.* 34. & 2 *King.* 22. And it is a double honour in persons that have so great temptations, to love the plain discoveries of their sin: But a *Joash* will slay even *Zechariah* the son of *Jehoiadah* that set him up: and a *Herod*, that hath so much religion as to [*fear* John, *as knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and to observe* (or save him) *and when he heard him to do many things and hear him gladly*, had yet so much love to his fleshly lust, and so little power to resist a flatterer, as that he could sell both the head of *John* and his own soul, for so pittiful a price as this, *Mar.* 6. 20, 25, 27, 28. So true is that of Christ him-

self, Joh. 3. 20, 21. *For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved* (or discovered) *But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.*

And indeed there is none that more oppoſeth *Micaiah* then *Zedekiah*; as being *concerned* for the honour of his *flattering propheſie*, to bring *plain dealing* into diſgrace. It is *he* that ſmiteth him and ſaith, *which way went the ſpirit of the Lord from me, to ſpeak unto thee*, 1 King. 22. 24. As *Plutarch* compareth the *flaterer* to a *painter*, that having made a picture of Cocks which was very bad, he bid his boyes be ſure to keep the living Cocks out of ſight, leſt their appearance ſhould ſhew the faultineſs of his picture: ſo ſaith *Plutarch* doth the flatterer do what he can to keep away *plain-dealing* faithful friends leſt his fraud and falſhood ſhould be detected by them: But ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 28. 23. *He that rebuketh a man, afterward ſhall find more favour then he that flattereth with the tongue.* And Prov. 27. 6. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend: but the kiſſes of an enemie are deceitful.* When *proſperity* is vaniſhed, the *flatterer* and the faithful

ful dealer will be better known. *Deceitful prosperity*, and *deceitful men*, will at once forsake you. None of them will admire or applaud you when you are low, and the tide is gone, and hath left you in contempt: These kind of men will be as ready as any to reproach you; As *Shimei* that honoured *David* in his prosperity; but curseth him and revileth him as a Rebel against *Saul*, and casteth stones at him, when he saw him flying in distress. *Plutarch* likeneth flatterers to lice, that forsake the bodies of the dead, because the blood is gone that did maintain them. Commonly men in *misery* or at *death*, have better thoughts of *faithful plainess*, & worse of smoothing *man-pleasers*, then before.

But whom can the prosperous blame so much as themselves, if they are undone by the deceit of flatterers? It is their own choice: They love to have it so: They will not endure faithful dealing. When they contract those diseases which will not be cured without bitter medicines, they hate the Physician that offereth them: Their appetites and sensual lust, and not their Believing-Reason, doth choose their work, their pleasures and their company, and prescribe what language must be spoken to them. And he that resolves to cast away the re-

medy, and will pleaſe his appetite and fancie, come on it what will, muſt take what he gets by it, and bear the endleſs wrath of God, that could not bear the neceſſary warnings and ſelf-knowledge that ſhould have prevented it; Did theſe men hate ſin and the meſſengers of Satan, they would not hate the Juſtice and meſſengers of God. But while they damnably Love fleſhly pleaſures, they cannot ſavingly Love the word that chargeth them to let go thoſe pleaſures; nor the perſons that croſs them in the things they love. And thus poor worldlings are ruined by their own deſires: It ſeemeth ſo ſweet to them to live in ſin, that they cannot endure to know the bitter fruits of miſery, which it will at laſt bring forth: They are conquered by their fleſhly luſts; and therefore they hate the meſſengers of that ſpirit, which would fight againſt them. Satan doth perfect his former victories in them, by diſpelling or diſperſing the auxiliaries of Chriſt, that were ſent for their reſcue and relief. They live as if they were *purpoſely made great*, that they may be able to drive away the meſſengers of ſalvation, and to keep the voice of mercy far enough from their ears: and to command that which the Gaderenes did intreat, that Chriſt

Christ would go out of their coasts, *Mark.* 5. 17. because they would not be troubled with him: They so much love the way to Hell, that they cannot abide to be told whither it leadeth them; and therefore they come thither before they are aware; and must know themselves by the unquenchable fire, because they would not know themselves by the discovering recovering Light. And thus by Prosperity and flattery, Satan pursues and wins his game.

Dir. 2. IN opposition to this Hinderance, two things are to be done. 1. *Desire not* so perillous a station as worldly Prosperity and greatness is. *Love not* and *seek not* a condition so hazardous to your souls. Leave that to them that take it for their Portion, as not believing what they must *lose* and *suffer* by it: or what God hath revealed of the life to come.

Or if you *be in such Prosperity*, not by your *Desire*, but by the will and Providence of God, let your *fear* and *watchfulness* be doubled, as your dangers are: Be not like those sensualists, *Jud.* 12. that *feed themselves without fear*. Use not prosperity to the pleasing of the flesh, and the

proſpering of your luſts: but deny your your ſelves in the midſt of your abundance: and turn it into an *adverſity* to your *ſenſual inclinations*, by *taming the body and bringing it into ſubjection*, and ſuſpecting your ſelves, and walking humbly with God and man.

And when *Adverſity* is upon you, *improve the opportunity* for the *knowledge* of *your ſelves*. *Then* take a juſt ſurvey of your *former* courſe of life. *Then* try your ways, when the drunkeneſs and deceits of proſperity are paſt, and the hand of God hath brought you into a ſober and conſiderate ſtate. O how many ſouls do know that in one day, when adverſity hath made them wiſe and ſenſible, which before they *knew* and *would not know*; they *ſaw* it, but did not *underſtand* and *feel* it! Then on a ſudden they are able to paſs a righter judgement, upon their yielding to temptations, and the value of the things that tempted them, and upon their worldly deſigns, and fleſhly wiſdom, and their neglects of God and Heaven and duty, then before they could do, though they had never ſo much inſtruction, and though they could ſpeak the ſame words of ſin as now. Affliction taketh away the deceiving advantages

tages of fleshly objects, and unmasketh the glory and profit of the world, and awakeneth the rational faculties to perform their office; and therefore is an excellent opportunity for *self-acquaintance*. The prodigal *came to himself* when he was denyed to fill his belly with the food of swine, *Luke* 15. 16, 17. *Nature* teacheth men to understand that it is the principal Lesson that Affliction readeth to us, *To know our selves*, and *our ways*, as they are related to *God* and to *his judgement*.

2. If you are in *Prosperity, be the more suspicious of flatterers, and drive them away with the greater detestation*: Be more careful to keep them from you, then to keep your bodies clean from vermine. And be the more solicitous to procure such faithful *Overseers* and Physicions for your *souls*, as will do their best to *save you*, though they *displease you*. O that you knew what an advantage it is to have a *faithful Pastor*, and a *faithful Friend*, that seek not *yours* but *you*, and make no advantage to themselves by flattering you, but choose the means that tend most to your salvation! And O that you knew the great disadvantage of those that want such a *Pastor* and such a *friend*! You would then be sure to give it as

your strictest charge to both, to deal *plainly* with you, and never to hide or extenuate your sin or danger. You would charge your Teachers, [What ever you do, deal faithfully with my soul! If you see me in any dangerous course, I beseech you tell me of it: If I should be hardened against your warnings and reproofs, I beseech you deal not lightly with me, but labour to awaken me, and set it home, and pull me out of the fire, and save me as with fear; *Jud.* 23.] O suffer me not to be quiet in my sins. The like charge also you would give to your friends that are about you, and converse with you; choose such Pastors, and choose such friends as are fittest, thus to prove your friends indeed: And charge them and intreat them, as they love your souls, and as they will answer it before God, that they suffer you not to sin for fear of displeasing you by plain reproofs: and resolve to submit and take it well. A stander by hath the great advantage of impartiality; and therefore may see that in you which you observe not in your selves: an object *too neer* the eye, or *too far off*, is not well discerned: *self-love* doth not hinder us so much in judging of other mens cases as our own. Friendly and

and faithful dealing in the matters of eternal consequence, is the principal use and benefit of friend-ship. This differenceth the communion of Saints from *Beelzebubs* swarme of flies and caterpillars. Thus *two are better then one: For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: But woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up*, Eccles. 4. 9, 10. Much more woe to him that hath a multitude to *cast* him and to *keep* him down.

Hind. 3. THE third *extrinsecal Impediment* to *self-knowledge*, is, *Conversing only with such as are as bad as our selves; and not with such whose lives display the Spiritual endowment, and excellencies which we want.* Among the *Ethiopians*, it seemeth no deformity to be *Black*: *Seneca* saith, that *no man is to be upbraided with that which is vitium humani generis, the common fault of all the world*, or of the *country where he lives*: for this were but to upbraid him that *he is a man*, or that he was *born in such a time or place*: Though Christians that know better the *common disease*, do know that there must be *common humiliation and remedie*; yet *these* indeed

are

are the thoughts of *most*: They know not that it is a matter of dishonour and lamentation, to be *no better then the most*, and to lie in the *common corruptions* of the world, and to have no better hearts then they had by *Nature*. To hear preachers talk of [*Holiness, and a Divine Nature, and a new birth, and of being made new Creatures*, and *of living in the Love of God, and in the joyful Hopes of endless Glory*] doth seem to them but as the talk of a world in the sun, or the description of an *Angel*, which *humbleth not them* at all, for not being *such*, nor exciteth in them any great desires *to be such*: As long as they *see* not the *persons that are such*, they think these are but *devout imaginations*, or the *pious dreams* of melancholy men; and that *indeed* there are no such persons in the world: or if there *be*, that they are but as the Papists Saints, here and there one to be *admired* and *canonized*, and not upon pain of *damnation* to be *imitated*. They judge of all the world, or almost all, by those about them; And they think that God should be unmerciful if he should condemn so great a number as they see are *like themselves*; and should save none but those few transcendent souls, that they are described, but hear unacquainted with. are

It

It sometimes melteth my heart, in pitty of many *Great ones* of the world, to think how *hard* a mater it is for them to know indeed *what Holiness is*; when they seldome *hear* so much as one *Heavenly prayer or Discourse*, or *any serious talke* of the matters of *Sanctification*, and *communion with Christ!* When *prophaness* and *inhumane wickedness* dwell about them, and make such as are but *civil* and *temperate*, and *good-natur'd* persons to seem *Saints*: When they *see* but few that *fear the Lord*, and *Love him unfeignedly*, and *live by faith*: and those *few* are perhaps of the more *cold*, and *timerous*, and *temporizing* Strain, that shew forth but little of the *Heavenly nature*, and the *vertues* of their holy faith; that dare scarce open their mouths to *speak* against the wickedness which they see or hear: that dare not *discourse* like the *Saints of the most High*, and the *heirs of Heaven*, for fear of being made the *scorn and by-word* of the rest, or of falling under the *frowns* and *dislike* of their superiors; so that they live among others *almost like common men*, save only that they run not with them to their excess of ryot; and think it enough that by such forbearance of gross sin, they are in some measure *evil*

spoken

ſpoken of: When they that ſhould *let their light ſo ſhine before men, that they might ſee their good works, and glorifie their heavenly Father*, (Matth. 5.15.16.) do *hide their Religion*, and put their *Light as under a buſhel*, and not in a *Candleſtick*, that it *might give light to all that are in the houſe*; and ſo when Religion never *appeareth* in its *proper ſplendor* and *power*, and *heavenly tendencie*, to thoſe *Great ones* that have no better company; what wonder if they never *know themſelves*, nor truly underſtand the *nature*, *neceſſity* or *excellency* of Religion? When they know it, for the moſt part, but by *hereſay*; yea and when they *hear it* more *reproached* then *applauded*, it muſt be a miracle of mercy that muſt make ſuch men to be ſincerely and heartily Religious. When they ſee ſo many about them worſe then themſelves, and ſo few better, and thoſe few that are better do hide it and live almoſt as if they were no better; and when the godly whom they *ſee not*, are deſcribed to them by the *Serpents ſeed*, as if they were but a company of *whining melancholy brainſick hypocrites*; who can expect that ever ſuch men ſhould ſavingly *know themſelves* or *Chriſt*, unleſs a *wonder of mercy* reſcue them, and bring them

hem from this darkneſs and deluſion into he light? O how oft have I wiſhed in ompaſſion to many of the *Great ones* of he world, that they had but the *company* vhich we that are their inferiors have! hat they did but *hear* the humble, holy eavenly language, *that we* have heard? nd hear the faithful fervent prayers, that many poor Chriſtians pour out before the Lord! and *ſaw* but the humble, harmleſs, exemplary and heavenly lives, of many *poor Chriſtians*, that are repreſented *to them* as the *filth and the off ſcouring of the world*, and perhaps no more regarded then *Lazarus* was at the Rich mans gate, *Luk.* 16. Did they but *ſee and hear* and *know* ſuch holy and heavenly Believers, and were as well acquainted with them as *we are*, how many of them would better *know themſelves*, and ſee what they *want*, and what they *muſt be*, and better diſcern between the righteous and the wicked, between thoſe that fear God, and that fear him not! *Mal.* 3. 18.

Dir.

Dir. 3. IT will therefore be a great help to the Knowledge of your ſelves, if you will *converſe with thoſe that bear the Holy Image of their Creator,* (Col. 3. 10.) and whoſe *lives* will tell you what it is to *live by faith,* and what it is to *walke in the ſpirit,* to *mortifie the fleſh,* and to live above all the alluring vanities of the world. We can more ſenſibly perceive the nature of holineſs, when we *ſee it in action* before our eyes, than when we *only read* a *deſcription* of it. Who could have known what *Life* is, or what *Reaſon* is, by bare *reading* or *hearing* their *deſcriptions,* if he knew them not *in himſelf* and *others,* by another kind of demonſtration! Many thouſands can honour the *name* of a *Saint* and the *Scripture deſcription* of a *Saint,* that hate the *life of holineſs,* when it *appeareth* to them in *practice,* and cannot endure a *Saint indeed.* It will moſt convincingly tell you what *you want,* when you *ſee* what *others have.* To ſee how *naturally they* breath after heaven, will moſt convincingly ſhew you the dulneſs and earthlineſs of *your minds:* To ſee how eaſily *they* can *love an enemy,* and *forgive*

ive a wrong, will acquaint yon moſt ſenſi-
ly with the ulcers of your paſſionate re-
engeful minds. Do but lay by your pre-
udice and partiality, and ſee whether there
e not in ſerious Chriſtians *another ſpirit*
hen in the world? and whether they
ive not upon the things *above*, which your
elief and love did never *reach*? Look upon
elievers, and conſider why *they pray*, and
atch and ſtudy to pleaſe God, and then
ethink your ſelves whether *you* have not
s much cauſe to do ſo as they: and ſo you
nay perceive your negligence by their dili-
gence, your ſenſeleſneſs by their tenderneſs
of heart and conſcience; your fleſhlineſs
by their ſpirituality, and the reſt of your
ins by the luſter of their graces. Saith
Gregory [*Qui pleniſſime intelligere appetit*
qualis ſit, tales debet aſpicere qualis non eſt;
at in bonorum forma metiatur quantus ipſe
deformis eſt.] that is [*He that would fully*
underſtand what he is, muſt look on ſuch as
are better then himſelf: that in the come-
lineſs of the good he may take the mea-
ſure of his own deformity.] As *Iſidore* ſaith
[*Minus homo ſeipſum ex ſeipſo conſide-*
rat] *Men know not themſeves by them-*
ſelves alone.

Hence

Hence therefore the *ſervants of God* may ſee how *exactly they ſhould live*, and of what *conſequence* it is that *they* be *eminently holy!* when it is *they* that by their heavenly excellency muſt convince the world of their ſinfulneſs and miſery. O Chriſtians, *do you* live ſuch *exemplary* and *convincing* lives? Is there indeed that *excellency of Holineſs appearing* in *you*, which may ſhew men, to the glory of your Redeemer, how the heirs of heaven do differ from the world? Alas, our common careleſs living doth wrong to multitudes as well as to ourſelves; and is a cruelty to the ſouls whoſe ſalvation we are bound by our examples to promote. What then do thoſe men that by their vicious ſcandalous converſation, do harden the ungodly, and cauſe them to think contemptuouſly, and to ſpeak ſcornfully of the holy way! O woe to them, if they repent not, by whom ſuch offence cometh.

Eſpecially Miniſters ſhould ſee that their lives be a *continual Lecture*; As *Hierome* ſaith [*Epiſcopi domus & converſatio quaſi in ſpeculo poſita, Magiſtra eſt publicæ diſciplinæ: quicquid fecerit, id ſibi omnes faciendum putant.*] That is, [*The houſe and converſation of a Biſhop, is ſet as in a glaſs*

(or

(or to be beheld) *as the teacher of publike discipline : All think they should do whatever he doth.*] And therefore *Chrysostome* concludeth [*that a Priest that is bad, doth acquire by his priest-hood, not dignity but disgrace : For* (saith he) *thou sittest in judgement on thy self : If thou live well and preach well, thou instructest the people : If thou preach well and live ill, thou condemnest thy self. For by living well and preaching well, thou instructest the people how to live : But by preaching well and living ill, thou instructest God as it were how to condemn thee.*]

And hence it is also that the servants of God should have a *care of their fame*, as well as of their *conversation*, because the *reputation* of *religion* dependeth much on the *reputation* of the *religious* : and *reputation* doth much to the encouraging or discouraging of the *ungodly* that are strangers to the *things themselves*. Saith *Augustine*, [*Conscientia necessaria est tibi, fama proximo tuo : Qui famam ancupans negligit conscientiam, hypocrita est : Qui confidens conscientiæ negligit famam, crudelis est*] that is, [*Conscience is necessary for thy self : and thy good name is necessary for thy neighbour.*] *He that hunteth after fame,*

and neglecteth conſcience, is an hypocrite: And he that ſo truſteth to a good conſcience as to neglect his good name, is cruel (to others) When we mind our fame for the *good of others*, and the *ſervice of God*, and not to pleaſe a proud vainglorious mind, and when we do it without *immoderate care*, ſeeking it only by righteous means, and referring the iſſue to the will of God, as being prepared for evil report as well as good, this is but to improve our talent to our maſters uſe.

II. I Come next to the *Internal impediments* to *ſelf acquaintance*, eſpecially in the *worſer ſort* of men.

1. The *firſt* that I ſhall acquaint you with, is, that *Natural deep rooted ſin of Pride, which ſtrongly inclineth men to think well of themſelves, and to deſire that all others do ſo too.* So that where Pride is not *diſcovered* and *ſubdued* by *grace*, men will ſcarce endure to be cloſely queſtioned by Miniſters or other friends about their ſin, and the condition of their ſouls: what, queſtion them whether they are *ungodly*, *unſanctified*, the *ſervants of ſin*

and

and Satan; in a ſtate of *death*, and *condemnation*? Their hearts will riſe with indignation againſt him that will put ſuch queſtions to them. What! queſtion them whether they have any ſaving grace! whether they are regenerate, pardoned, and have any grounded hopes of heaven! They love not the ſearching word of God; they love not the diſtinguiſhing paſſages of Scripture, they love not a faithful ſearching Miniſter, becauſe they would diſhonour and trouble them with ſuch doubts as theſe. A *Proud man* judgeth not of himſelf *as he is*, but as his tumified diſtempered fancie *repreſenteth* him to himſelf to be. To *think himſelf ſomething when he is nothing*, and ſo to be wilfully his own *deceiver*, is his *diſeaſe*, Gal. 6. 3. And as *Pride* is one of the deep-ſt-rooted ſins in man, and of greateſt ſtrength, and hardlieſt extirpated and overcome; ſo *true ſelf-acquaintance* muſt be accordingly difficult, it being carryed on but by ſuch degrees as we get ground and victory againſt our pride. As Melancholy men that are wiſe in all other things, may be far from the right uſe of reaſon in *ſome one point*, where the *fantaſie is crazed* and the diſtemper lyeth; ſo a *Proud man*, how

wise soever in any other matters, as to the *right knowledge of himself*, is like one that is *crackt-brained*, and hath not *indeed the use of reason*; *Pride* was his *first Tutor*, and taught him what to *believe of himself*: so that Christ who comes after with a humbling doctrine, cannot be *believed*, nor scarce with any *patience heard*: O what a disease is to be cured, before a Proud person will well know himself! What labour do we lose in all our sermons! Yea how oft doth the *medicine irritate the disease!* So that a poor wretch that is under the wrath of God, and knoweth not when he is gone out of the assembly, whether the justice of heaven will not take vengeance on him before he come hither again, yet cannot abide to hear of this, but with *Ahab*, hateth the Preacher that prophesieth evil of him, be it never so true. It is pride that leadeth up that armie of corruptions, that here strive against the light of truth, that is sent to convince and convert the guilty. And is a man like to be *saved* by the word, while he *hateth* it, and bends his thoughts and passions all against it?

Dir. 1.

Dir. 1. HE therefore that will ever *know himself*, must *first let in so much of the light, as may take down his arrogancy*, and *bring him as a little child to the school of Christ.* First know what thou art *as Man*; and then know what thou art as *a sinner*, and *sentenced by God*; that so thou mayst come to know what thou art as one that is under the hopes and duties of the *Redeemed.* When thy *proud* heart rebelleth against conviction, remember with *whom thou hast to do.* Will *God speak submissively* to thee for fear of offending thee? will he cry thee mercy for handling thee so roughly as to tell thee thou art yet the child of wrath? Is *he* afraid to talke to thee of *death* or of *damnation*? Will he recall his threatnings, and repent him of the severity of his laws, because *such worms* are *angry* with them, or will not *believe* them? Perhaps thou mayst make a *false-hearted, frightful, man-pleasing Minister*, to change his strain of plainer dealing, and become thy flatterer, or be silent: But will *God* be *silenced*? will he *stoop* to thee, and bend or stretch his word to *humor thee*? O no; he will one day tell thee what thou art

with another voice then this of a mortal and despised man, and in another manner then *preachers* tell it thee. If thou canst frown the *Preacher* out of the *pulpit*, or out of his fidelity to God and thee, yet canst thou not frown *God* out of *heaven*. He will speak to thee more terribly, then the terriblest preacher that ever thou heardst: And if thy *Pride* shall rise up, and tell him that he doth thee wrong, how quickly will thy *mouth be stopped*, and thou be forced to confess thy guilt! *Rom.* 3. 5, 6, 19. O stoop man to the humbling word of grace; or God will make thee stoop to the words and strokes of wrath. Fear him that will make the proudest fear, before he hath done with them. Judged thou must be; by *thy self*, to *self-abasing* and *conversion*, or *by God* to *desolation* and *confusion*: And canst thou easier bear *Gods judgement* then *thy own!* *Stoop* foolish self-deluding dust! Stoop sinful wretch, and know thy misery! If thou stand it out a little longer, an undiscerned blow will bring thee down; and thou shalt not see the hand that strikes thee, till thou art humbled to the grave and hell. O how absurd, yet pittiful a sight is it, to see poor sinners brave it out against the humbling message of the

the Lord! as if they could make good their cause against him! and scorn to know that they are going to Hell, till they are there! And then, will Pride preserve them from the knowledge of it? It is shameful folly to be Proud and obstinate, where a man knoweth beforehand that he must submit at last, and is not able to stand it out.

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2. THE second *Intrinsecal Impediment* to *self-acquaintance* is *an unreasonable tenderness of our selves*; when an *inordinate Love* of *ease and quietness of mind* doth prevail with us to hold fast all that thus *quieteth us at the present*, without regard of due *provision* for the *time to come*; In this there is a mixture of *unreasonableness* and *self-love*: It is indeed the very *brutish disposition*. A beast will not willingly be dieted for his future health: Let him have at *present* what he loveth and you please him, though you feed him for the slaughter! for he hath not reason to foresee what followeth: An ox must be bound and cast and held down by force, if you will shooe him, though it be to the keeping of his feet from hurt; or if you will pull out a thorn, or do any thing for his good that hurteth him at the *present*: you please not

your horse by letting him blood, though you save his life by it. Fleshly-minded men have thus bruitified themselves, so that they judge of things by *present feeling*, and have not Reason and Faith to look before them, and judge of things by what they tend to; even by the good or hurt that will follow in the end. It is a very terrible troublesome thing, for a man that is unregerate, unjustified, and unreconciled to God, to know it; For a man that hath any feeling left, to find himself in a state of condemnation: This is to stir up all the terrors of his soul, and cast him into perplexing fears and disquietments of mind; so that he cannot eat, or drink, or sleep in quietness, but the troublesome thoughts of sin and everlasting wrath torment him: And the inconsiderate man that judgeth of things by present feeling, will not endure this; and therefore must needs have the windows shut, and the light removed that sheweth him these perplexing sights: As most men hate those that speak against them, be the matter never so true; so they cannot endure those thoughts that do accuse them, nor to have a reprover so neer them, even in their own breasts: A Conscience within them, to preach to them night and

day

day; not one hour in a week, but where-ever they go, and whatever they are doing, to be so *neer*, so *constant*, so *precise*, and so *severe* and *terrible* a Preacher, as usually a newly enlightened and awakened conscience is; this seemeth intolerable to them; And whatever come of it, this Preacher must be silenced, as turbulent and vexatious, and one that would make them Melancholy or mad. And this is the condemnation of these miserable souls, that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil: For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved, *Joh.* 3. 19, 20. And thus while men are so tender of themselves, that they will do nothing that troubleth or hurteth them at the present, they venture upon all the miseries that they are forewarned of.

Dir. 2. BE not *unreasonably tender of a little disturbance at the present, nor unbelievingly careless of the misery to come.* Cannot you endure to *know* your sin and misery, and yet can you endure to *bear* it? will you *go to Hell* for fear of *knowing*

knowing that you are *in the way*? Must you not know it with everlasting woe and vengeance when you come thither, if by *knowing your danger* you *prevent* not your coming thither? Is it easier to *bear Gods wrath for ever*, than to find at *present* that you have *offended* him? Sirs, the question is *whether you are under the condemnation of the law, or not*? Whether you are regenerate and justified, or yet in your sin? If you *are Justified*, far be it from me to perswade you to think that you are under condemnation: I leave that to Satan and the malicious world, who are the condemners of those that Christ doth Justifie. But if you are *unregenerate* and *unjustified*, what will you do at *death* and *judgement*? Can you stand before God, or be saved upon any other terms? You cannot; if God be to be believed, you cannot: and if you know the Scriptures, you *know* you cannot! And if you cannot be saved in an unrenewed unjustified state, is it not needful that you *know it*? Will you cry for help before you find your selves *in danger*? or strive to get out of sin and misery, before you believe that you are *in it*? If you think that you have no other sin than the pardoned infirmities of the Godly, you will never

never so value Jesus Christ, and pray and strive for such grace as is necessary to them that have the unpardoned reigning sins of the ungodly. If it be necessary that you be saved, it is necessary that you value and seek salvation; and if so, it is necessary that you know your need of it, and what you must be and do if you will obtain it! It is a childish or brutish thing, below a man of reason, to stick at a little present trouble, when Death cannot otherwise be prevented: If you can prove that ever any was converted and saved by any other way then by coming to the knowledge of their sin and misery, then you have some excuse for your presumption: But if Scripture tell us of no other way, yea that *there is* no other way, and you know of none that ever was saved by any other, I think it is time to fall to work, and search and try your Hearts and lives, and not to stop at a straw when you are running for your lives, and when damnation is as it were at your backs. You should rather think with your selves, If we can so hardly bear the forethoughts of Hell, how shall we be able everlastingly to bear the torments?

And consider, that *Christ* hath made the discovery of your sin and misery to be now com-

comparatively an *eaſie burden*, in that he hath made them *pardonable* and *curable*: If you had not had a *Saviour* to fly to, but muſt have looked on your miſery as a *remedileſs caſe*, it had then been *terrible indeed*; and it had been no great miſtake to have thought it the beſt way to take a little eaſe at preſent, rather then to diſquiet your ſelves in vain. But through the great mercy of God, this is not your caſe; you need not deſpair of pardon and ſalvation, if you will but hear while it is called *To day*. The taske that you are called to, is not to *torment your ſelves* as the damned do, with the thought of unpardonable ſin, and of a miſery that hath no help or hope; but it is only to find out your diſeaſe, and come and open it to the Phyſicion, and ſubmit to his advice and uſe his means, and he will freely and infallibly work the cure. It is but to find out the folly that you have been guilty of, and the danger that you have brought your ſelves into, and come to Chriſt, and with hearty ſorrow, and reſolution to give up your ſelves unto his grace, to caſt away your iniquities, and enter into his ſafe and comfortable ſervice. And will you lie in Hell, and ſay, We are ſuffering here, that we might eſcape the

trouble

rouble of foreseeing our danger of it, or of endeavouring in time to have prevented it! We dyed for fear of knowing that we were sick! We suffered our house to burn to ashes for fear of knowing, that it was on fire! O Sirs, be warned in time, and own not, and practice not such egregious folly, in a business of everlasting consequence. Believe it, if you sin, you must know that you have sinned: and if you are in the power of Satan, it cannot long be hid. Did you but know the difference between discovering it now while there is hope, and hereafter when there is none, I should have no need to perswade you to be presently willing to know the truth, whatever it should cost you.

Hind. 3. ANother great *impediment* of the *Knowlege of ourselves*, is, *that self-love so blindeth men that they can see no great evil in themselves or any thing that is their own*: It makes them believe that all things are as they would have them be; Yea and better than they would have them: For he that would not indeed *be Holy*, is willing by himself and others to be *thought* so: Did not the lamentable experience of all the world confirm

firm it, it were incredible that *self love* could so exceedingly blind men. If *Charity* think *no evil* of *another*, and we are very hardly brought to believe any great harm by those we love; much more will self-love cause men to see *no evil by themselves*, which possibly they can shut their eyes against: it being more radicated and powerful than the love of *others*. No arguments so cogent, no light so clear, no oratory so perswading, as can make a self-lover think himself as bad as indeed he is, till God by grace or terror shall convince him. When you are preaching the most searching sermons to convince him, self-love confuteth or misapplyeth them; When the markes of tryal are most plainly opened, and most closely urged, self-love doth frustrate the preachers greatest skill and diligence: When nothing of sense can be said to prove the piety of the impious, and the sincerity of the formal hypocrite, yet *self love* is that wonderful Alchymist, that can make gold not only of the basest mettal, but of dross and dirt: Let the most undenyable witness be brought to detect the fraud and misery of an unrenewed soul, *self-love* is his most powerful defender; No cause so bad which it cannot justifie; and no person so miserable but it will pronounce him

him happy, till God by *Grace* or *wrath* confute it. Self-love is the grand Deceiver of the world.

Dir. 3. *Subdue this inordinate self-love, and bring your minds to a just impartiality in judging.* Remember that *self-love* is only powerful at *your private bar*: and it is not *there* that your cause must be *finally decided*: It can do nothing at *the bar of God*; It cannot *there* justifie, where it is condemned it self: God will not so much as *hear it*, though you will hear none that speak against it: *self-love* is but the vicegerent of the grand Usurper, that shall be deposed and have no shew of power, at Christs appearing, when he will judge his enemies.

And here it will be a helpful course, to see your *own* sin and misery *in others*, and put the case as if it were *theirs*, and then see how you can discern the evil of it. O how easie is it with the most, to see and aggravate the faults of *others*? How safe were we if we were as impartial to *ourselves*!

And

And alſo it will be very uſeful to deſire often the help of more impartial judgements then your own: *Fit enim neſcio quomodo* (*inquit* Cicero) *ut magis in aliis cernamus, quam in nobis met ipſis, ſiquid delinquitur.* Others can quickly ſpie our faults, as we can quickly find out theirs: Therefore as Poets and Painters do expoſe their works before they finiſh them, to the common view, that ſo what is blamed by many may be conſidered and amended; ſo ſhould we in order to the judging of our ſelves, obſerve both what our friends and enemies ſay of us, and the more ſuſpiciouſly try what others blame. But eſpecially have ſome neer judicious friends that will prudently and faithfully aſſiſt you. A true friend is an excellent looking-glaſs. Saith *Seneca, Deliberate well firſt in the chooſing of a friend*, and *then with him deliberate of all things.*

And if you would have the benefits of friendſhip, diſcourage not plain dealing. *Magis amat objurgator ſanans* (*inquit* Auguſt.) *quam adulator diſſimulans.* I know a reprover ſhould be wiſe, and *love* muſt be predominant if he will expect ſucceſs; for if he ſpeak *lacerato animo*, as *Auguſtine* ſaith, it will ſeem but *punientis impetus*

impetus and not *corigentis charitas.*) But *we* must take heed of judging that we are *hated*, because we are *reproved*: that is, that a friend is not a friend, because he doth the office of a friend. Of the two it is fitter to say of a reproving enemy, *He dealeth with me like a friend*] then of a reproving friend, *He dealeth with me like an enemy:*] For, as *Augustine* saith, *Accusare vitia officium est bonum, quod cum mali faciunt, alienas partes agunt*] *It is a good office to speak ill of vice, which when bad men do, they play anothers part.* It is a *happy enmity* that helpeth you to deliver you from *sin and hell:* and a *cruel friendship* that will let you undoe your soul for ever, for fear of displeasing you by hindering it.

There are two sorts that deprive themselves of the saving benefit of necessary reproof, and the most desirable fruits of friendship: The one is the *Hypocrite* that so *cunningly hideth* his *greatest* faults, that his friend and enemie never tell him of them: He hath the happiness of keeping his physicion unacquainted with his disease, and consequently of keeping the disease. The other is the *Proud*, that can better endure to be *ungodly* then to be *told*

of it, and to *live in many ſins*, then to be *freely admoniſhed of one*.

Conſider therefore that it will prove *ſelf-hatred* in the effect, which is now called *ſelf-love*: and that it would ſeem but a ſtrange kind of *love from another*, to ſuffer you to fall into a Cole-pit, for fear of telling you that you are neer it; or to ſuffer you to fall into the enemies hands, leſt he ſhould affright you by telling you that they are neer: If you love *another* no better then thus, you have no reaſon to call your ſelf his *friend*; And ſhall this be your wiſeſt Loving of your ſelves? If it be Love to damn your ſouls for fear of *knowing your danger of damnation*, the *Devil* loveth you: If it be friendſhip to keep you out of Heaven for fear of diſquieting you with the Light that ſhould have ſaved you, then you have no enemies in Hell. The Devil himſelf can be content to grant you a *temporal quietneſs* and *eaſe*, in order to your everlaſting diſquietneſs and woe. Let go your *hopes of Heaven*, and he can let you be merry a while on earth: while the ſtrong armed man keepeth his houſe, the things that he poſſeſſeth are in peace. If it be not *friendſhip* but *enmity* to trouble you with the

the sight of sin and danger, in order to your deliverance, then you have *none* but *enemies in Heaven*: For *God himself* doth take this course, with the dearest of his chosen. No *star* doth give such light as the *Sun* doth: No *Minister* doth so much to make a sinner *know himself*, as *God* doth. *Love your selves* therefore in the way that *God loveth you*: Be impartially willing that God and man should help you to be throughly acquainted with your state: Love not to be flattered by others or your selves. Vice is never the more lovely because it is yours: And you know that pain is never the more easie or desirable to you, because it is yours. Your *own* diseases, losses, injuries, and miseries, seem the worst and most grievous to you: And why should not *your own sins* also be most grievous? You love not poverty, or pain, because its your own; O love not sin because it is your own.

Hind. 4. ANother impediment to *self-acquaintance*, is, *that men observe not their hearts in a time of trial, but take them always at the best, when no great temptation puts them to it.* A man that never had any opportunity to *rise in the world*, perhaps doth think he is *not ambitious*, and desireth not much to be higher then he is: because the *coal* was never *blown*: when a little *affront* doth ferment their *Pride* into *disquietness* and *desires of revenge*; or *applause* doth ferment it into *tumor* or *self-exaltation*, they observe not then the distemper when it is *up* and most observable; because the *nature of sin* is to please and blind, and cheat the *mind* into a *consent*: And when the sin *seems past*, and they find themselves in a seeming humility and meekness, they judge of themselves as then they find themselves, as thinking that distemper is past and cured, and they are not to judge of themselves by what they *were*, but what they *are*. And by that Rule every *drunkard* or *whoremonger* should judge themselves temperate, and chaste, as soon as they

forbear

forbear the *act of sin*: And what if poverty, age or sickness hinder them from ever committing either of them again? For all this the person is a drunkard or fornicator still; because the *Act* is *not pardoned*, nor the *heart sanctified*, and the *habit* or corrupt inclination *mortified*. And thus *passionate* persons do judge of themselves by their *milder temper*, when no *temptation* kindleth the flame. But little doth many a one know himself, what corruption is latent in his heart, till tryal shall disclose it, and draw it into sight. *Jam diu Diabolus* (*inq.* August.) *sopitum ignem sine ullis flammis occultat, donec duas faculas jungens ambas simul accendat, &c.*] If these persons be not *always sinning*, they will not take themselves for *sinners*: But he that hath *once sinned knowingly*, in Gods account continueth in the sin, till his *heart be changed* by true *repentance*.

Yet, on the other side, I would not wrong any upright soul, by perswading them to judge of themselves, *as they are at the worst*, in the hour of temptation; for so they will be mistaken as certainly; though not as dangerously as the other.

You will aske then, *What is to be done in such a difficult case? If We must neither judge of our selves as we are at the best out of temptation, not yet as we are at the worst in the hour of temptation, when and how then shall we judge of our selves?*

I answer, It is one thing to know *our particular sins*, and their *Degrees*, and another thing to know *our state in general*, whether we are justified and sanctified or not. To discern what *particular sin* is in us, and how apt it is to break forth into act, we must watch all the stirrings and appearings of it, in the time of the temptation: But to discern whether it be *unmortified* and have *dominion*, we must observe these *Rules*.

1. *There is no man on earth that is perfectly free from sin:* and therefore it is no good consequence, that *sin reigneth* unto death, because it is not *perfectly extinguished*, or because it is *sometime* committed, unless in the cases after expressed.

2. *No sin that is truly Mortified and Repented of, shall condemn the sinner:* For pardon is promised to the *truly penitent*.

3. *Whatever sin the Will, accordingly to its Habitual inclination, had rather* leave *then* keep, *is truly Repented of and mortified.*

For

For the *Will* is the *principal seat* of sin; and there is *no mere sinfulness*, then there is *Wilfulness*, Rom. 7. 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22.

4. *There are some sins which cannot be frequently commited in consistency with true grace, or sincere repentance: and some which may be frequently commited in consistency with these.* As where sins are *known* and *great*, or such as are *easily subject to the power of a sanctified will*, so that he that *will* reject them, *may*: As *one* such sin must have *actual Repentance*, if *actually known*; so the *frequent* committing of such will not consist with *Habitual Repentance*. Whereas those sins, that are so *small* as upright persons perhaps may not be sufficiently excited to resistance; or such as upon the sincere use of means are still *unknown*, or such as a truly *sanctified Will* may *not subdue*, are all of them consistent with repentance and a justified state; And in this sense we reject not that distinction betwixt *Mortal and Venial sin*; that is, between *sin inconsistent with a state of Spiritual life*, and *sin consistent with it*, and consequently pardoned. He that had *rather leave* the *former* sort (the mortal sins) *will* leave them; and he that

truly repents of them, *will forsake* them: But of the *other* (consistent with Life) we must say, that a may may possibly retain them, that yet *had rather* leave them, and doth *truly repent* of them.

5. *A sin of carnal Interest* (esteemed good *in order to some thing which the flesh desireth; and so loved and deliberately kept*) *hath more of the Will, and is more inconsistent with Repentance, then a sin of meer passion or surprize, which is not so valued upon the account of such an interest.*

6. *They that have grace enough to avoid Temptations to Mortal or Reigning sin, and consequently that way to avoid the sin, shall not be condemned for it, whatever a stronger temptation might have done.*

7. *Where bodily diseases necessitate to an act, or the omission of an act, the Will is not to be charged with that which it cannot overcome, notwithstanding an unfeigned willingness:* As if a man in a *frenzie* or *distraction* should swear or curse, or blasphem; or one in a *Lethargie*, or potent Melancholy cannot read or pray, or meditate; *&c.*

8. *As frequent Commissions of venial sins* (or such as are consistent with true grace)

grace) *will not prove the soul unsanctified; so the once committing of a gross sin by surprize, which is afterward truly repented of, will not prove the absence of habitual repentance, or spiritual life, so as the frequent committing of such sins will.*

So that I conclude, in order to the detection of *the sin itself*, we must all take notice of our selves as at the *worst*, and see what it is that Temptations can do: but in order to the discovery of *our state*, and whether our sins are *pardoned* or no, we must especially observe whether their eruptions are such as will consist with *true habitual Repentance*, and to note what Temptations do with us; to this end,

Dir. 4.

Dir. 4. *OBſerve then the workings and diſcoveries of the heart, and judge of its abundance, or habits by your words and deeds.* Note what you were when you had *opportunity to ſin*, when the full cup of *pleaſure* was held out to you, when *preferment* was before you, when *injurie* or *provoking words* did blow the coal; *If then* ſin appeared, judge not that you are *free*, and that none of the *roots* are latent in your hearts; Or if you are ſure that ſuch diſpoſitions are hated, repented of and mortified, yet you may hence obſerve what diſeaſes of ſoul you ſhould chiefly *ſtrive againſt*, to keep them *under*, and prevent a new ſurprize or increaſe. It is uſual for ſuch licentiouſneſs, ſuch ſelf-ſeeking, ſuch ugly pride and paſſion to break forth upon ſome ſpecial temptations, which for many years together did never appear to the perſon that is guilty, or to any other, that it ſhould keep the beſt in fear and ſelf-ſuſpicion, and cauſe them to live in

inconstant watchfulness, and to observe the bent and motions of their souls: and to make use afterward of such discoveries as they have made to their cost in time of tryal.

And it much concerneth *all true Christians*, to keep in *remembrance* the *exercise* and *discoveries* of *grace* which formerly upon *tryal* did undoubtedly appear, and did convince them of the sincerity which afterward they are apt again to question. Will you not believe that there is a *sun* in the firmament unless it *always shine* upon you? Or that it is *hot* unless it be *always Summer*? Will you not believe that a man *can speak*, unless he be *always speaking*? It is weakness and injurious rashness in those Christians, that upon every damp that seizeth on their spirits, will venture to deny Gods former mercies, and say that they had *never special grace*, because they *feel* it not at *present*: that they *never prayed* in sincerity, because some distemper at present discomposeth or overwhelmeth them: that their former *zeal* and *life* was *counterfeit*, because they are grown more *cold* and *dull*; that

their

their *former comforts* were all but *hypocritical deluſions*, becauſe they are turned now to *ſorrows*: As much as to ſay, *Becauſe I am now ſick, I was never well, nor ſo much as alive.* O were it not for the tender *compaſſions* of our *Father*, and the ſure *performance* of our *Lord* and *Comforter*, and that our peace is more in *his* hand than our *own* (though more in *our own* than any *others*,) it could never be that a poor diſtempered imperfect ſoul, ſhould here have any conſtancie of peace; Conſidering the power of ſelf-love and partiality, on one ſide, and of grief and fear and other paſſions on the other; and how little a thing doth ſhake ſo moveable and weak a thing, and muddy and trouble a mind ſo eaſily diſturbed; and how hard it is again to quiet and compoſe a mind ſo troubled, and bring a grieved ſoul to reaſon, and make paſſion underſtand the truth, and to cauſe a *weake afflicted ſoul* to judge clean contrary to what they *feel*: all this conſidered, no wonder if the peace and comfort of many Chriſtians be yet but *little* and *interrupted* and *uneven*: and if there be *much crying* in a family that hath ſo many *little ones*, and much

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complaining where there are so many weak and poor: and many a *groane* where there is so much *pain*. To shew us the *Sun* at *midnight*; and convince us of *Love* while we *feel* the *rod*; and to give us the comfortable sense of *grace*, while we have the uncomfortable sense of the *greatness* of our *sin*; to give us the *joyful hopes of glory*, in a *troubled melancholy dejected* State: all this is a work that requireth the special helpe of the Almighty, and exceeds the strength of feeble worms. Let God give us never so full discoveries of his tendereſt Love and our own sincerity, as if a voice from Heaven had witnessed it unto us, we are questioning all if once we seem to *feel* the contrary, and are perplexed in the tumult of our thougths and passions, and bewildred and lost in the errors of our own disturbed minds. Though we have *walkt* with God, we are questioning whether indeed we ever knew him, as soon as he seemeth to hide his face. Though we have felt another life and spirit possess and actuate us than heretofore, and found that we love the things and persons which once we loved not, and that we

we were quite falln out with that which was our former pleaſure, and that our ſouls broke off from their old delights, and hopes and ways, and reſolvedly did engage themſelves to God, and unfeignedly delivered up themſelves unto him; yet *all is forgotten*, or the convincing *evidence* of *all* forgotten, if the lively influences of heaven be but once ſo far withdrawn, as that our preſent ſtate is clouded and afflicted, and our former vigour and aſſurance is abated. And thus unthankfully we deny God the praiſe and acknowledgement of his mercies, longer than we are *taſting* them, or they are *ſtill before us*; All that he hath *done for* us is as *nothing*, and all the *Love* which he hath manifeſted to us is called *hatred*; and all the *witneſſes* that have put their hands to his Acts of Grace, are *queſtioned*; and his very *ſeals denyed*, and his *earneſt miſinterpreted*, as long as our *darkened diſtempered* ſouls are in a condition *unfit* for the *apprehenſion* of Mercy; and uſually when a *diſeaſed* or *afflicted body* doth draw the *mind* into too great a participation of the affliction. And thus as we are *diſpoſed our ſelves*,

ſo

so we judge of *our selves* and of all our *receivings*, and all *Gods dealings* with us: A soul in a *cheerful lively frame*, thinks well of all that God doth to him; and hath thoughts of *Hope*, and *Peace*, and *Joy*; as *Health* disposeth the body to *alacrity*, and can make a man *merry*, that hath little else: Whereas a soul *overwhelmed* with *cares*, and *fears*, and *griefs*, and *muddyed* with sinfull excessive *thoughtfulness*, and *habituated* in a *diseased sickly frame*, is *afraid* of every thing, and turneth matter of *comfort* into *sorrow*, and is in *daily pain* by its *own imaginations*; like a man that hath a *sore*, and is hurt with the *thought* that *some body toucht* it. When we *feel our selves well*, all goes well with us, and we put a good interpretation upon all things: And when *we are out of order*, we complain of every thing, and take pleasure in nothing, and no one can content us, and all is taken in the worser part; As the Poet said,

Lata

Læta ferè lætus cecini, canotriſtia triſtis.

You ſhall have a merry ſong from a merry heart, and a ſad ditty from a troubled grieved mind.

And thus while the diſcoveries both of *ſin* and *grace*, are at *preſent overlookt*, or *afterwards forgotten*, and almoſt all men judge of themſelves by *preſent feeling*, no wonder if few are well *acquainted* with *themſelves*.

But as the *Word* and the *works* of God muſt be taken *together*, if they be underſtood, and not a ſentence, part or parcel taken ſeparated from the reſt which muſt make up the ſenſe: ſo alſo the *workings* of God *upon your ſouls* muſt be taken *altogether*: and you muſt read them over from *the firſt till now*, and ſet all together, and not forget the letters, the part that went before, or elſe you will make no ſenſe of that which followeth. And I beſeech all weak and troubled Chriſtians to remember alſo that they are but children and Schollars in the ſchool of Chriſt: and therefore when they cannot ſet the ſeveral parts together,

together, let them not overvalue their unexperienced understandings, but by the help of their skilful faithful Teachers, do that which of themselves they cannot do: Enquire what your *former mercies signifie*: Open them to your guides, and tell them how God hath dealt with you from the *beginning*, and tell them how it is with you *now*: and desire them to help you to perceive how *one* conduceth to the right understanding of the *other*. And be not of *froward* but of *tractable submissive minds*; and thus your *self-acquaintance* may be maintained, at least to *safety*, and to *some degree of peace*, if not to the *joys*, which you desire, which God reserveth for their proper season.

I Should have added more on this necessary subject, but that I have said so much of it in other writings, especially in the *Saints Rest*, *Part.* 3. *chap.* 7. and in my Treatise of *Self-denial*, and in *the Right Method for Peace of Conscience*.

I must confess I have written on this subject as I did of *Self-denyal*, viz. with expectation that all men should confess the truth of what I say; and yet so few be cured by it of their *Self-ignorance*, as that still we must stand by, and see the *world distracted* by it, the *Church divided*, the *Love of Brethren interrupted*, and the *work of Satan carryed on* by *error*, *violence*, and *pride*; and the hearts of men so strangely stupified, as to go on incorrigibly in all this mischief, while the *cause* and *cure* are opened before them, and all *in vain*, while they confess the truth! so that they will leave us nothing to do, but exercise our *compassion* by lamenting the deliration of phrenetick men, while we are *unable* to *save* the *Church*, their *brethren*, or their *own souls*, from the dilacerations and calamitous effects of their furious *self-ignorance*. But Christ that hath sent us with the *light* which *may* be *resisted*, and *abused*, and *in part blown out*, will speedily come with *Light unresistible*, and will teach the *proud*, the *scornful*,

ful, the *unmerciful*, the *self-conceited*, the *malicious*, and the *violent*, so effectually to *know themselves*, as that no more exhortations shall be necessary for the reception of his convictions; nor will he or his servants any more beseech men to consider and know their sin and misery, nor be beholden to them to believe and confess it. See *Jude v.* 14. 15. And is there no Remedy for a stupified inconsiderate soul? Is there no prevention of so *terrible* a *self-knowledge*, as the Light of Judgement, and the fire of Hell will else procure? Yes, the remedy is certain, easie, and at hand: *even to know themselves till they are driven to study, and seek and know the Father and his Son Jesus Christ*: Joh. 17. 3. And yet is the Salvation of most as hopeless almost as if there were *no remedie*, because no perswasion can prevail with them to *use it*. Lord, what hath thus lockt up the minds and hearts of sinners against thy truth and thee? what hath made Reasonable man so unreasonable, and a *self-loving* nature so

mortally to hate it self? O thou that openeth and no man shutteth, use the Key that openeth Hearts; Come in with thy Wisdome and thy Love, and all this blindness and obstinacy will be gone. At least commit not the *safety of thy flock*, to such as will not *Know themselves*: But *gather thy remnant, and bring them to their folds, and let them be fruitful and increase; and set up shepheards over them, which shall feed them, and let them fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor be lacking*, Jer. 23. 3, 4. *Ordain a place for them, plant them, and and let them dwell therein unmoved; and let not the children of wickedness waste them any more*, 1 Chron. 17. 9. *As a shepheard seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so seek out thy sheep and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day*, Ezek. 34. 12. *Save thy people and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever*, Psal. 28. 9.

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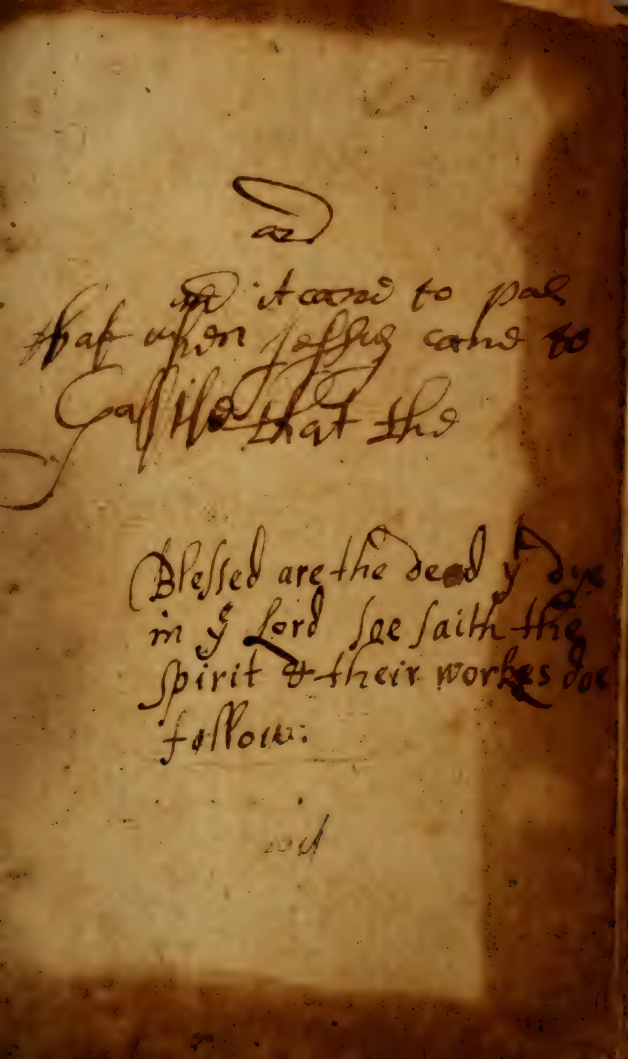
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Hosannah to King Davids
Hosannah to ye Christ
ye in ye Almightys name doth Come
Hosannah in ye high st